

THE St. John's Review



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Part I
Writings Published
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William O'Grady

The Return of Odysseus

Mary Hannah Jones

The first view Homer gives us of Ithaka is a feast of the suitors at the house of Odysseus. In between bouts of unrestrained eating and drinking the suitors listen to songs. Phemius the bard sings for them, not by choice but under compulsion. The song he sings this night is the *nostos*, the return, of the Achaeans from Troy. (1.326) The *nostoi* are traditionally a part of what is known as the epic cycle, the poems which told the whole history of the Trojan war and its aftermath. Critics have noted that this reference to the *nostoi* at the feast of the suitors contains an evident and double-edged irony. There is one story of homecoming that cannot be sung yet, the story of Odysseus, which he will bring home with him. The *Odyssey* is in fact just another of these homecomings, the *nostos* of Odysseus. But the painful irony for the suitors is that this story of return has already been set in motion. Such was Athena's purpose in coming to the feast of the suitors this night.

Athena's presence has already set in motion the series of events which will culminate in the return of Odysseus. But his return is a complicated matter indeed. Fully one-half of the *Odyssey*, books one through twelve, is devoted to bringing Odysseus from Calypso's island to his native land. Many things have to be achieved before Odysseus can set foot on Ithaka.

The return of Odysseus is in part a matter of fate. He is many times said to be fated to see his friends and home again. It is partly a matter of divine intervention. Athena

recounts Odysseus' virtues and sufferings to Zeus twice and twice urges that such a man deserves to be released from sorrow. But most of all the return of Odysseus is determined by enormous human effort. Odysseus must strive in every way possible to achieve his return, and his family and friends must strive to keep open a place in their lives for him. Athena sets in motion a plan for the return of Odysseus which demands the greatest possible effort on the part of everyone concerned.

The beginning of Athena's plan for the return of Odysseus is the sending of both Telemachus and Odysseus on a journey. Telemachus must travel to Pylos and Sparta; Odysseus must painfully make his way to Scheria and there win convoy home. Let us examine these two journeys and try to see why they are necessary to achieve the return of Odysseus.

The first four books of the *Odyssey* are the story of Telemachus: how he makes preparation for the return of his father. In his conversation with Mentès, who is of course Athena in disguise, we are shown how much is needed to prepare him.

When Mentès asks Telemachus if he is indeed the son of Odysseus, Telemachus makes a reply that is shocking by Homeric standards. Telemachus says that he has been told that he is the son of Odysseus, but that he himself does not know, for no man can know his own parentage. If this were true it would mean the collapse of the heroic world, since heroes are only heroes because they trace their descent from a god. Everything depends upon what is passed on from father to son; that is why the heroic genealogies are so important. Knowing a man means knowing his father and grandfather and other ancestors. If Telemachus is to be anyone in Homer's world, he must

An alumna of St. John's College, M.H. Jones has been teaching at Marshall University. She is now studying and teaching at the University of Pennsylvania.

first come to know that he is the son of Odysseus. This is the preparation that he must make for the return of his father.

Athena sends Telemachus on a journey that contains many echoes of Odysseus' adventures. Telemachus sails by night to distant places; he meets a beautiful enchantress; drugs are secretly placed in his wine; he is the guest of people who want to detain him too long. But none of these things is in itself a sufficient reason for this dangerous journey or a preparation for the return of his father. When Athena is relating her plan to Zeus she says, "I will send him (Telemachus) to Sparta and to sandy Pylos, in order for him to inquire after the return of his dear father, if he may hear something, and in order for him to attain noble *kleos* among men." (1.94-5) The Greek word "*kleos*" means interchangeably fame or glory and the story or song which glorifies. Athena is sending Telemachus on his journey to inquire after a story and to become part of a story, because only in this way can he enter the world of his father.

The first stage of Telemachus' journey is to Pylos to the palace of the wise old king Nestor. They come upon Nestor as he and his sons and the other men of Pylos are making sacrifice to Poseidon. But Telemachus is suddenly afraid to approach this famous counselor. He says to the disguised Athena, "Mentor, how shall I go? How shall I greet him? I am in no way experienced in well-wrought speech." (3.22-23) Telemachus has good reason to be abashed at his inexperience in speaking. Nestor's primary excellence in the war at Troy was his skill in speech and in council.

To be able to speak well is part of being a hero. Phoenix in his famous speech to Achilles in book nine of the *Iliad* says that Achilles' father had sent him (Phoenix) to the young Achilles in order to initiate him into the heroic world: to teach him to be a speaker of words and a doer of deeds. (9.443) These two complementary aspects of heroism are continually referred to in Homer. When Achilles in Hades asks Odysseus whether Achilles' son Neoptolemus became a champion in the war, Odysseus replies that Neoptolemus always spoke well in council and always distinguished himself in battle. (11.511-515) When Penelope tells of her great fear for Telemachus on his journey, she says that he knows nothing either of the toils of battle or the councils of men. (4.818)

Speaking words and doing deeds are the two poles of the heroic world, and just as Achilles surpasses all others as a warrior in battle, so Odysseus surpasses all others as a contriver of well-wrought speech and counsel. Nestor himself says that there was no one at Troy who could compete with Odysseus in *metis*, skill in council. (3.120) In the *Iliad* Odysseus acknowledges Achilles' supremacy on the battlefield but boasts that he is the best in council.

Odysseus is the hero of speech as Achilles is the hero of deeds, and perhaps this accounts for the obvious difference in style between the two epics. Deeds are resplendent and certain, but can leave no room for subtlety, while words may be as subtle as the skill of the speaker makes them, but they can never be as certain and unambiguous as deeds. And so the *Iliad* takes its clarity and bright passion from the splendor inherent in great deeds, while the characteristic doubleness and complexity of the *Odyssey* derive from the ambiguity inherent in all speech.

Athena replies to Telemachus' shame-faced question by saying that he was not born and reared without the favor of the gods. (3.28) Telemachus' birth will make him a speaker of well-wrought words; he must rely on his Odyssean heritage. Telemachus and Athena join Nestor's sons at the sacrifice and participate in the feast. In the course of the ceremony greater deference is shown to Athena than to Telemachus, because Athena appears to be a man at least a generation older than Telemachus. But when the time comes for Nestor to question the strangers, it is Telemachus, not Mentor, who speaks for both. Telemachus deftly and courteously explains why he has come and how he hopes Nestor can help him. Nestor, in his long reply to Telemachus' well-ordered and concise speech, touches upon Odysseus' special excellence, his primacy in council, and then breaks off to say, "(such was) your father, if indeed you are his son. Wonder holds me as I look upon you, for indeed your words are like his, nor would anyone have thought that a younger man could speak so like him." (3.122-125)

In his encounter with Nestor Telemachus first finds what can give him the only true assurance that he is indeed the son of Odysseus: he sees in himself the qualities his father is famous for. Nestor says that he and Odysseus never spoke at variance in the assembly or at council, but always, having one heart (*hena thumon echonte*) advised the Achaians for the best. In the long conversation that ensues Telemachus forms an alliance in speech with Nestor just as his father had. He and Nestor by means of their teasing speeches manage to provoke Athena into giving a manifest sign of her divinity.

Nestor begins by shrewdly observing that there might yet be hope that Odysseus will return. And if Athena should choose to show favor to Telemachus as she openly favored Odysseus and stood manifestly by his side, then the wooers would soon forget marriage. Telemachus, who had certainly recognized the stranger Mentos as a god in disguise, replies that the aid of a god is too great a thing to hope for, and as for Odysseus, his hoped-for return could never come to pass, not even if a god should will it. Athena interrupts in exasperation to say that it is easily within the power of a god to bring a man home, even from far away, and it is surely better to return late

after many toils than to be murdered at homecoming as was Agamemnon. Telemachus reiterates that it is impossible for Odysseus to return, and cleverly seizes on Athena's mention of Agamemnon as an excuse to change the subject. He asks Nestor to tell the whole story of Agamemnon's murder. Athena waits impatiently as Nestor talks on and the sun slowly sets. When Nestor finally brings his story to a close Athena forcefully suggests that it is time to go home. She directs Nestor to give Telemachus a chariot and horses for his journey to Sparta and then disappears into the clouds having transformed herself into the likeness of a sea-eagle. Telemachus and Nestor by their partnership in speeches have attained from Athena the manifest sign of divine favor she had once shown to Odysseus.

In his exchange with Nestor Telemachus has explored the possibilities of speech in their comic aspect. He has playfully challenged a goddess in speech, in much the same way as Odysseus will vie with Athena in speech in book thirteen when she first confronts him without disguise. But in his journey to Sparta Telemachus is given a taste of the bitterness speeches may contain and the griefs and dangers that may be hidden in them.

When Telemachus comes to the house of the storied Helen and Menelaus, he arrives at the wedding of Menelaus's son (by a slave woman), Megapenthes, whose name means "monstrous grief." That night Helen and Menelaus tell stories about the heroic deeds of Odysseus.

The stories which Helen and Menelaus tell are only told on account of the influence of the drug which Helen casts into their wine. Helen acquired this drug in Egypt "where the grain-giving earth bears the greatest profusion of drugs, many good in mixture, and many baneful." (4.228-229) The special character of this drug is that it takes away all grief and anger and brings forgetfulness of all evils. But first we should recount the events which precede Helen's recourse to the drug.

When Telemachus and Nestor's son Peisistratus, who accompanies him to Sparta, first arrive at the house of Menelaus they are astonished by the wealth it contains and remark upon it. Menelaus overhears what they say and replies that the wealth he amassed from his years of wandering is not worth the lives of his friends who died at Troy. But it is for Odysseus especially that he mourns since it was he who undertook the greatest labors for Menelaus' sake. Telemachus, who had been so self-possessed at Nestor's house, loses his composure and is unable to reply to Menelaus. Peisistratus speaks for him and they are all reminded of the losses they suffered at Troy and they all weep. At the suggestion of Peisistratus, whom Homer calls wise, Menelaus proposes that they give over speaking about Odysseus and the others

whom they have lost. In the morning, he says, there will be *mythoi*, stories, for Telemachus and him to tell each other to the full. (4.214-5)

It is then that Helen casts the drug into the wine and makes a second beginning of *mythoi*, stories (4.239). She says, "Feast now as you sit in the halls and take delight in stories: I will tell appropriate things." The word I have translated as "appropriate things" is "*eoikota*" which comes from a very common verb which means "to be appropriate or seemly" but also "to seem or appear to be." Lattimore translates this same sentence "What I tell you is plausible." Helen goes on to tell her story.

I could not tell you all the number nor could I name them,
all that make up the exploits of enduring Odysseus,
but here is a task such as that strong man endured and accomplished
in the Trojan country where you Achaians suffered miseries.
He flagellated himself with degrading strokes, then threw on
a worthless sheet about his shoulders. He looked like a servant.
So he crept into the wide-wayed city of the men he was fighting,
disguising himself in the likeness of somebody else, a beggar,
one who was unlike himself beside the ships of the Achaians,
but in his likeness crept into the Trojans' city, and they all
were taken in. I alone recognized him even in this form,
and I questioned him, but he in his craftiness eluded me;
but after I had bathed him and anointed him with olive oil
and put some clothing upon him, after I had sworn a great oath
not to disclose before the Trojans that this was Odysseus until he had made his way back to the fast ships and the shelters,
then at last he told me all the purpose of the Achaians,
and after striking many Trojans down with the thin bronze edge, he went back to the Argives and brought back much information.
The rest of the Trojan women cried out shrill, but my heart was happy, my heart had changed by now and was for going back
home again, and I grieved for the madness that Aphrodite bestowed when she led me there away from my own dear country,
forsaking my own daughter, my bedchamber, and my husband,
a man who lacked no endowment either of brains or beauty.
(4.240-266, Lattimore's translation)

Let us look at Helen's story closely. She begins by describing it as a labor of Odysseus, but in fact the subject of Helen's story is Helen. It is about how she alone recognizes Odysseus in disguise, but there is more than

this. She alone overcomes his guileful avoidance of her, she takes his disguise from him, she bathes him, and she wins his complete trust. Odysseus, so wary and distrustful in other circumstances, tells her *panta noon*, all his mind. This is the story of the triumph of Helen over yet another man. Helen ends her story on a note of self-justification. (And this is most necessary, since in telling of her intrigue with Odysseus she has revealed herself as the betrayer of the man she betrayed her first husband for.) She says the other Trojan women wept, but she was glad, for her heart was *already* (*ēde*) turned to go back to her home. Apparently we are meant to think that the events Helen recounts happened fairly early in the war.

After Helen finishes Menelaus tells a story which is meant to be a complement to her story. In fact he begins with almost the same words she had used.

Here is the way that strong man acted and the way he endured
 action, inside the wooden horse, where we who were greatest
 of the Argives all were sitting and bringing death and destruction
 to the Trojans. Then you came there, Helen; you will have been moved by
 some divine spirit who wished to grant glory to the Trojans,
 and Deiphobos, a godlike man, was with you when you came.
 Three times you walked around the hollow ambush, feeling it,
 and you called out, naming them by name, to the best of the Danaans,
 and made your voice sound like the voice of the wife of each of the Argives,
 Now I myself and the son of Tydeus and great Odysseus were sitting there in the middle of them and we heard you crying
 aloud, and Diomedes and I started up, both minded to go outside, or else to answer your voice from inside, but Odysseus pulled us back and held us, for all our eagerness.
 Then all the other sons of the Achaians were silent: there was only one, it was Antiklos, who was ready to answer,
 but Odysseus, brutally squeezing his mouth in the clutch of his powerful hands, held him, and so saved the lives of all the Achaians until such time
 as Pallas Athene led you off from us.
 (4.266-289, Lattimore's translation)

Although the ostensible subject is Odysseus, in fact the real subject of this story is also Helen. It is about her attempt to seduce and betray not one leader of the Achaians but all of them. She can imitate their wives very well—Helen can pretend to be anyone's wife—but she was not able to overcome Odysseus, and he prevents the other men from yielding to her. Since it is the wooden

horse the Achaian leaders are hidden within, we know exactly when this attempted seduction took place. It was in the day Troy fell, the very last day of the war, long after Helen said her heart was already turned back to her home and husband.

Menelaus' story perfectly matches Helen's. Her story was about a successful intrigue, his is about a foiled one; her story contains a justification of herself, his contains a condemnation. It is not hard to see why Helen casts the drug which dulls grief and anger into their wine. Without such a drug she and Menelaus could hardly bear each other's stories. Telemachus, who has been silent since his father's name was first mentioned, abruptly brings an end to these sly and hateful stories.

This night at Sparta has introduced Telemachus in some measure to the sorrow and bitterness that Helen and the Trojan war have brought into the world. But even here in Sparta he is recognized by all as the son of his father. (4.143) Telemachus has seen something of his father's nature in himself, and he has gained some insight into the world of heroes and stories. He will never need to say again that he does not know who his father is. Telemachus will return to Ithaka prepared to meet his father, as was Athena's plan for him.

Athena's plan for Telemachus has been accomplished. But what of her plan for Odysseus? Like Telemachus Odysseus must also be prepared for his return; he cannot go directly home. First he must journey to the land of a mysterious people who live at the ends of the inhabited world. But what is it that these Phaiakians will do for Odysseus?

There are two gods who speak of what will happen to Odysseus during his stay with the Phaiakians. Poseidon, when he first catches sight of Odysseus on his raft approaching their land says, "So indeed he is close to the land of the Phaiakians, where it is his fate to escape out of the great bond of misery which has come upon him." (5.288-90) The word which I have translated 'bond' is *peirar*, which properly means rope or cord. By derivation from this original sense it comes to mean end or limit or boundary, as well as the extreme stage or crisis of something. In the land of the Phaiakians Odysseus is fated to reach the final limit of his misery and escape from it.

The other god who speaks about the Phaiakians is Zeus, who says that the Phaiakians will honor Odysseus like a god and send him home, "bestowing bronze and gold in abundance upon him, and clothing, more than Odysseus could ever have taken away from Troy, even if he had escaped unharmed with his fair share of the plunder." (5.38-40, Lattimore's translation) Everything he had gained in his victory at Troy Odysseus has lost in his painful wanderings. But the Phaiakians will somehow make good what was lost. What he receives from them will re-

store to him what he now lacks.

From what Zeus and Poseidon say, it seems that Odysseus must go to the land of the Phaiakians because only there can he escape finally from the misery that has bound him and only there can he find some sort of compensation for what he now painfully lacks. Let us examine carefully Odysseus' stay among the Phaiakians to see how his fate and the plan of the gods for his return unfold.

Zeus says that Odysseus must endure terrible suffering in his journey from Calypso's island to the land of the Phaiakians. (5.33) And his journey is indeed painful. He sails for eighteen sleepless days and then is battered by a storm sent by Poseidon which destroys his raft and leaves him no recourse but to swim through the swollen waves for another two days and two nights. When he crawls onto the shore there is scarcely a spark of life left in him. He finds shelter under two thick bushes and covers himself in the fallen leaves. Homer conveys Odysseus' state of utter exhaustion and depletion in a beautiful simile:

As when a man buries a burning log in a black ash heap in a remote place in the country, where none live near as neighbors and saves the seed of fire, having no other place to get a light from, so Odysseus buried himself in the leaves, and Athene shed a sleep on his eyes so as most quickly to quit him, by veiling his eyes, from the exhaustion of his labors. (5.488-493, Lattimore's translation)

This simile speaks to more than Odysseus' physical state. When Odysseus crawls naked onto the shore of Scheria he has lost everything: his companions, his ships, his treasure, his youth, his sense of heroic identity. Odysseus has failed in everything he has tried to accomplish since he sailed from Troy. The only partial victory he was able to attain, his triumph over the Cyclops, resulted in the curse of Poseidon which brought on him and his companions the worst fate possible. The consequences of the wrath of Poseidon destroyed his companions and delayed his return home until matters reached a desperate state even in Ithaka. For seven years Odysseus has remained a captive on Calypso's island, weeping over his many sorrows and feeling each day the ebbing away of what remains of his life. (5.152)

But it is not just that Odysseus has been deprived of the good things that make life worth living. Odysseus has been worn down by his sufferings; he is crushed and bound by his grief. When Odysseus first makes his supplication to the Phaiakians that they send him home, the king Alkinoos in his reply remarks that Odysseus looks like one of the immortals. This is of course very common in Homer: all the heroes resemble the gods, that is part of why they are called heroes. But to Odysseus this remark seems a bitter irony. He says, "Alkinoos, let this

not be in your thoughts. I am not like the immortals who hold broad heaven, either in form or stature, but like mortal men. Whomever you know of men, who bear the greatest burden of misery, to those I liken myself in my distress." (7.208-212) Later Laodamus will say of Odysseus that he looks like a champion, but he has been broken by his many hardships. (8.137) Odysseus cannot return to Ithaka in this state. Athena has sent Odysseus to Scheria for him to find, if he can, a restoration of what he has lost and a healing of the sorrow that has broken him. Let us see how the Phaiakians give Odysseus what he needs to go home.

While Odysseus is deep in his sleep of exhaustion, Athena goes to set in motion the first part of her plan for him. She goes to the palace of Alkinoos, the king of the Phaiakians, and finds there his young daughter, Nausikaa, asleep in her chamber. She appears to Nausikaa in a sort of dream, and, taking the likeness of another young girl who is a friend of Nausikaa's, urges her to gather the soiled linen in the palace and take it to the washing places beside the river. There of course she will meet Odysseus, but why is this necessary? Homer says that Athena goes to the house of Alkinoos, "devising the return of great-hearted Odysseus." (6.14) Let us try to see how Odysseus's encounter with Nausikaa is a necessary part of Athena's plan.

Nausikaa goes with her handmaidens to the washing pools near where Odysseus lies asleep. After the linen is washed and dry and they are almost ready to return to the city, "then Athena took other counsel, to awaken Odysseus in order that he look upon the lovely girl who would lead him to the city." (6.112) Athena wants Odysseus to look upon Nausikaa, but what does he see?

A few lines before they meet Homer gives a description of Nausikaa:

But when she and her maids had taken their pleasure in eating, they all threw off their veils for a game of ball, and among them it was Nausikaa of the white arms who led in the dancing; and as Artemis, who showers arrows, moves on the mountains either along Taygetos or on high-towering Erymanthos, delighting in boars and deer in their running, and along with her the nymphs, daughters of Zeus of the aegis, range in the wilds and play, and the heart of Leto is gladdened, for the head and the brows of Artemis are above all the others, and she is easily marked among them, though all are lovely, so this one shone among her handmaidens, a virgin unwedded.

(6.99-109, Lattimore's translation)

Odysseus is awakened from his deep sleep by the cries of the girls as they are playing. They all scatter as he

approaches them except Nausikaa to whom Athena gives the courage to stand fast. Odysseus' supplication of her also contains a description of Nausikaa:

I am at your knees, O queen. But are you mortal or goddess?
If indeed you are one of the gods who hold wide heaven,
then I must find in you the nearest likeness to Artemis
the daughter of great Zeus, for beauty, figure, and stature.
But if you are one among those mortals who live in this
country,
three times blessed are your father and the lady your mother,
and three times blessed your brothers too, and I know their
spirits
are warmed forever with happiness at the thought of you,
seeing
such a slip of beauty taking her place in the chorus of dancers;
but blessed at the heart, even beyond these others, is that one
who, after loading you down with gifts, leads you as his bride
home. I have never with these eyes seen anything like you,
neither man nor woman. Wonder takes me as I look on you.
Yet in Delos once I saw such a thing, by Apollo's altar.
I saw the stalk of a young palm shooting up. I had gone there
once, and with a following of a great many people,
on that journey which was to mean hard suffering for me.
And as, when I looked upon that tree, my heart admired it
long, since such a tree had never yet sprung from the earth, so
now, lady, I admire you and wonder, and am terribly
afraid to clasp you by the knees. The hard sorrow is on me.
(6.149-169, Lattimore's translation)

Homer often compares mortals to gods. In describing Nausikaa he likens her to Artemis in a beautiful simile. It is true that Nausikaa is like Artemis; Odysseus says so also, but quickly passes on to make a still more beautiful comparison. He likens her not to a goddess but to a mortal being, a delicate young sapling. It is easy to see that Odysseus' comparison is the more appropriate one. Homer's gods, since they are immortal and ageless, can never have the tender innocence which is Nausikaa's loveliness. Only a mortal creature can be young.

Nausikaa is the first mortal Odysseus has seen in seven years. It is important that Odysseus, newly returned from the company of gods, see in Nausikaa the beauty that only mortals possess. But this first vision is not all that happens between Odysseus and Nausikaa. Let us recount the events more fully.

When Athena comes to Nausikaa in a dream she says that Nausikaa ought to attend to the soiled linen because she will need much clean linen for her wedding, which will not be long delayed. When Nausikaa asks her father for the cart and mules to take the linen to the distant washing pools, he understands that she has her wedding in mind, though she is too shy to say so. (6.66) When Odysseus first addresses her he also speaks of marriage: "may the gods give you everything that your heart longs for; may they grant you a husband and a house and sweet agreement in all things, for nothing is better than this, more steadfast than when two people, a man and his

wife, keep a harmonious household." (6.180-184, Lattimore's translation)

When Odysseus first approaches Nausikaa he is naked and starving and encrusted with the brine of the sea. But after he has eaten and bathed and clothed himself Athena effects a transformation in his appearance, the most elaborate in all the poem, and one surely intended for Nausikaa's benefit.

Then Athena, daughter of Zeus, made him seem taller
for the eye to behold, and thicker, and on his head she
arranged
the curling locks that hung down like hyacinthine petals.
And as when a master craftsman overlays gold on silver,
and he is one who was taught by Hephaistos and Palla Athene
in art complete, and grace is on every work he finishes,
so Athena gilded with grace his head and his shoulders,
and he went a little aside and sat by himself on the seashore,
radiant in grace and good looks; and the girl admired him.
(6.229-237, Lattimore's translation)

While Odysseus is sitting on the shore, Nausikaa says to her handmaids that she wishes such a one as he might be her husband, or that it might please him to remain. Nausikaa has begun to fall in love with Odysseus, and it is clearly part of Athena's plan that she should.

When Odysseus returns to Ithaka, he must make a new beginning, he must start his life again for the second time. Perhaps through seeing the youthful Nausikaa's incipient love for him Odysseus is able to find something still young in himself, something that gives him hope that he will be able to make a new beginning in Ithaka. Perhaps it is important for the middle-aged and painfully experienced Odysseus, (who is twice called in Scheria *pater xeinós*—revered father), to feel that there is still something in himself that can move and be moved by Nausikaa's fresh-heartedness.

Nausikaa helps to bring out in Odysseus, even recreate in him, something that has laid dormant in his nature for a long time. Later, in their final conversation, he acknowledges the importance of what she has done for him. When she asks him to remember her when he is safe in his native land he says, "There always I will pray to you as to a goddess, all my days, for you, maiden, have given me life." (8l.467-9)

But Odysseus' meeting with Nausikaa is only part of Athena's plan for his return. At the opening of book eight Alkinoos leads Odysseus to the assembly of the Phaiakians, which he has called in honor of the stranger. This assembly lasts all day and all through the long night. Five books, more than one-fifth of the entire *Odyssey*, are spent relating the events which happen here. The assembly is clearly a vital part of Athena's plan, for it is she, in the likeness of Alkinoos' herald, who goes about the city call-

ing each man to assembly. Here the same words are used as were used of Athena's appearing to Nausikaa in a dream: in gathering the assembly Athena is said to be "devising the return of great-hearted Odysseus." (8.9) And, just as Athena had earlier made Odysseus more handsome so that Nausikaa would admire him, so here she also magnifies Odysseus' appearance, and many of the Phaiakian lords wonder at him. (8.18)

Why has Athena gone to so much trouble to bring about this assembly? How is Odysseus' presence here part of her plan for his return? When Homer is describing how Athena in disguise calls all the Phaiakian men to assembly he goes on to tell us what her purpose is. Homer says that Athena is contriving all this for Odysseus "in order that he might be welcomed and win awe and reverence from all the Phaiakians, and that he might complete the many *aethloi* (contests or labors) through which the Phaiakians made trial of Odysseus." (8.21-23) Let us try to see what this means and why it is necessary.

At the end of book six, Odysseus, before he makes his way to the palace of Alkinoos, waits in a grove sacred to Athena. There he prays to the goddess in a way which reveals something of his state of mind. His prayer is, "Listen, child of aegis-bearing Zeus, unwearied one. Hear me now, since before you did not hear me in my affliction, when the glorious earth-shaker brought affliction upon me. Grant that I may come to the Phaiakians as one to be welcomed and to be pitied." (6.324-327) Odysseus only hopes to be pitied, but being pitied is not enough for a hero. He cannot return to Ithaka merely as an object of pity. That is why it is part of Athena's plan that he win from the Phaiakians the awe and reverence that are appropriate to his heroic stature.

The Phaiakians attach great value to contests. Laodamas, the favorite son of Alkinoos, says that there is no greater glory for a man than what he wins by his own hands and feet in competition. (8.147-8) And so contests form an important part of the Phaiakian assembly which Athena has convened. The young men of the Phaiakians compete with one another in running, wrestling, leaping, throwing the discus, and boxing. Odysseus looks on, but he does not wish to participate. When Laodamas invites him to join in a contest he says, "Laodamas, why do you urge this mockery? I have sorrows on my mind far more than contests." (8.153-4)

Odysseus is, as he says later, bound by his misery and suffering. (8.182) But he is not allowed to remain a bystander. A young Phaiakian prince insults him by saying that Odysseus does not join in contests because he does not know any: he looks like a huckster, not an athlete. (8.164) Stung by the young man's sneer, Odysseus hurls a heavier discus much farther than any of the Phaiakian athletes had. Athena is there on the playing

field, in the likeness of a Phaiakian man, solely in order to declare that Odysseus has won the contest. Of course Athena does not need to do this, since, as she herself says, it is obvious to everyone that his throw is far beyond any of the others. Athena is there only to mark the importance of the occasion for Odysseus.

Odysseus has been stung into making trial of and revealing his excellence (*arete*), as Alkinoos says. (8.237) And all of the Phaiakians are astounded. (8.235) By showing his excellence, by allowing it to flare out in him, Odysseus comes to know that he still possesses that excellence, even after all the years when he lacked the opportunity to exercise it. For the first time in the poem Homer says that Odysseus rejoiced (*gēthēsen* 8.199) and he is able to speak "with a lighter heart" (8.201) and to trust his excellence enough to challenge all the young men. Odysseus boasts that he can hold his own in all the contests they have held, and mentions two contests which appear to be unknown among the unwarlike Phaiakians, shooting arrows and hurling spears. For the first time among the Phaiakians Odysseus marks out his place in the heroic world. He claims that he was second only to Philoktetes in archery and that he can hurl a spear farther than another man can shoot an arrow. (8.119; 229)

Odysseus now asks for more than pity—he makes claim to the awe and reverence that must be his due if he is to rejoin the world of men as the hero Odysseus. And the Phaiakians make the appropriate response. They give him princely gifts, the sort called by Homer *xenia*, meaning gifts of guest-friendship. Such gifts establish a permanent reciprocal relationship between the kingly house of Odysseus and the lords of Scheria. They represent the Phaiakians' full acknowledgement of Odysseus as a lord and a hero.

But the greater part of what Odysseus must do in achieving his *nostos* is yet to be done. Let us look again at Athena's purpose for this assembly as it was stated at the beginning of book eight. There we were told that Athena had assembled the Phaiakians in order that Odysseus "might complete the many *aethloi* (contests or labors) through which the Phaiakians made trial of Odysseus." What does this mean and how does it happen?

This is a strange and difficult passage in many ways. The word *aethlos* (contest or labor) which occurs here is used of the games of the Phaiakians. Those contests are also called *aethloi*. But this statement of Athena's purpose cannot refer to the games of the Phaiakians. Odysseus can only be said to have won one game, the contest of throwing the discus; but here he is said to fulfil many—*polloi*—*aethloi*. What could this refer to? What are these *aethloi* and how does Odysseus complete them? Let us look at the Greek text a little more closely.

The Greek text reads: *kai ekteleseien aethlous pollous, tous*

Phaiekes epeiresant' Oduseos. There are three words here that admit of a wide range of meanings: *ekteleo*, *peirao*, and *aethlos*. Let us look at them one by one.

Odysseus is said to complete (*ekteleo*) many labors. *Ekteleo* means to complete or accomplish or fulfill, to bring to completion or fruition. The word *teleo* alone means to accomplish or complete. The prefix "*ek*" gives an additional connotation of finality. *Ekteleo* often has the sense of giving a final end to something, making it finally complete. When the suitors finally force Penelope, after her long delay, to complete the web she has been weaving so long, *ekteleo* is the word used to express that action.

The second key word in this passage is *peirao*. Odysseus completes many labors, through which the Phaiakians make trial of (*peirao*) him. *Peirao* is a word which is used continually in the *Odyssey* and it is not always easy to express its full meaning in English. It means to make trial of something in the sense of to try to find out about something. *Peirao* means to encounter something in such a way as to learn something about it, to find out its true nature. When Odysseus first takes his famous bow into his hands and turns it around examining it, *peirao* is the word that is used.

The last and most important word is *aethlos*. Odysseus completes many contests/labors (*aethloi*). This word is particularly associated with Odysseus. The original sense of the word seems to be contest. So the games of the Phaiakians are called *aethloi*, as is the contest of Odysseus's bow. *Aethlos* can also mean task or labor, the most famous being the labors (*aethloi*) of Heracles. But an *aethlos* is not just any purposeful activity or labor. It carries with it a strong connotation of suffering. An *aethlos* is a labor that involves suffering; it is a labor that is also a hardship.

The word *aethlos* is associated with Odysseus because it is the word that is regularly used to refer to his deeds. When Helen and Menelaus are telling stories about what Odysseus undertook and accomplished they are telling about his *aethloi*. (4.241) But of course the most famous *aethloi* of Odysseus, the labors which define his heroic identity, are the adventures which he relates to the Phaiakians at the same assembly which Athena gathered at the beginning of book eight. These *aethloi* are, I believe, the only ones this passage at the opening of book eight could refer to.

The translation I propose for this puzzling statement of Athena's purpose is: "that Odysseus might bring to a close his many labors/hardships, by which the Phaiakians came to know him." The many *aethloi* which Odysseus brings to a close are the ones which he tells to the Phaiakians, and the way in which he brings them to a close is by telling of them. Athena's chief purpose in gathering this assembly is the activity which occupies part of the evening and all of the night: Odysseus' telling of

his labors and revelation of his identity. The culminating labor of the hero of speech is the long telling of his own story.

But Odysseus has been prepared to tell his definitive story, the story of his many years of painful and fruitless wandering, by listening to another story about another *aethlos* of Odysseus: the story of the fall of Troy. Let us look at this scene, which immediately precedes Odysseus' revelation of his identity and his long telling of his *aethloi*.

After the dancing and feasting which form such a large part of the Phaiakian assembly are over, Odysseus asks the bard Demodocus to sing the song of the wooden horse, which is of course the stratagem of Odysseus by which the city was finally taken. Demodocus tells the whole story of the fall of Troy through to its ending at the house of Helen's new husband, the Trojan leader Deiphobus. There, Demodocus says, Odysseus, having endured the most terrible battle, finally conquered through great-hearted Athena:

So the famous singer sang his tale, but Odysseus melted, and from under his eyes the tears ran down, drenching his cheeks. As a woman weeps, lying over the body of her dear husband, who fell fighting for her city and people as he tried to beat off the pitiless day from city and children; she sees him dying and gasping for breath, and winding her body about him she cries high and shrill, while the men behind her hitting her with their spear butts on the back and the shoulders, force her up and lead her away into slavery, to have hard work and sorrow, and her cheeks are wracked with pitiful weeping.

(8.521-530, Lattimore's translation)

This simile used to describe the quality of Odysseus' tears is the most astonishing in all of Homer. Homer compares the conqueror of Troy to the most miserable and innocent victim of war. The gulf between this woman and the warrior Odysseus is as great as it can be. And yet the resourceful sacker of cities weeps the tears of this desolate and defenseless woman.

This grief of Odysseus is broad enough and deep enough to encompass all the oppositions of our human nature. His tears encompass male and female, attacker and defender, victor and victim. There is a moment in the *Iliad* as well in which the tears of the victor and the defeated mingle. Achilles and Priam, two hardened enemies, are able to exchange comfort and a kind of forgiveness by means of such tears.

But perhaps the deepest understanding of these tears is to be found in the works of Homer's greatest student and interpreter, Virgil. In the *Aeneid*, in Virgil's imitation of this passage in the *Odyssey*, Virgil gives a beautiful name to these all-encompassing tears—they are the *lacri-*

mae rerum, the tears of (and for) things. Virgil's battered and wandering hero, Aeneas, sees in the halls of Dido in Carthage a painted portrayal of the fall of Troy, just as Odysseus in the halls of Alkinoos in Scheria listens to the song of the fall of Troy. Aeneas weeps as he looks upon the paintings and he says, "Here too honor receives its due reward, here also are the tears of things, and here mortality touches the mind." (1.461-2) (*Sunt hic etiam sua praemia laudi, sunt lacrimae rerum et mentem mortalia tangunt.*)

The *lacrimae rerum* are the tears of all humanity, the tears of mortality, and for this reason there is no distinction in them between Greek and Trojan, conqueror and conquered. The perspective from which victor and victim are alike in their painful mortality is a divine one, but in Homer's pantheon it belongs only to the Muse. All the Olympian gods, even Zeus, take sides in the war at Troy, supporting one side and hating the other. But the poet Homer, in his communion with the Muse, is able to tell the truth of both sides. The poet is not bound by the misery of the defeated or the elation of the victors. He can sing of the mortality of both.

Odysseus is able to break the bond of misery that has held him by merging his suffering with the sorrow of all mankind, that is, by seeing his sufferings as a story. Alkinoos had said, just before Odysseus begins his long telling of his *aethloi*, that the gods spun destruction for the Achaeans and the Trojans at Ilium so that there might be a song for men yet to be. The sorrow and the song are linked by divine agency, and this may be the only true grace of the gods bestowed upon men in the world of Homer. In stories there is the possibility of healing. The song somehow makes bearable the sorrow and destruction from which it is made.

Odysseus brings his *aethloi* to a close by telling of them and this also is the way in which the Phaiakians come to know him. Odysseus had postponed naming himself until the moment when he began his story. But it is necessary for Odysseus to reveal himself to win the only sort of conveyance the Phaiakians can offer. For the Phaiakian ships have no pilots; the ships are guided by the thoughts and minds of the Phaiakians. (8.559) Phaiakian sailors cannot convey an anonymous passenger to an unknown destination. To give Odysseus conveyance home they must know who he is and so he must tell his story.

The Phaiakians have done for Odysseus what Poseidon and Zeus said that they would do. They have restored to him what he lacked, his sense of heroic identity, and they have allowed him to escape from the bond of misery which had held him. The Phaiakians convey Odysseus home in a deep and mysterious sleep. "They bent to their rowing, and with their oars tossed up the sea spray, and upon the eyes of Odysseus there fell a sleep,

gentle, the sweetest kind of sleep with no awakening, most like death." (13.78-81, Lattimore's translation) This sleep is indeed like death, it is like the death which has been prophesied for Odysseus, which is to be very gentle and from the sea. This death-like sleep is an appropriate way for Odysseus to return to his rightly and irrevocably chosen mortality.

But what of the Phaiakians who have given Odysseus so much, what happens to them? Just after Alkinoos asks to know Odysseus' name he refers to a prophecy his father told him, that someday Poseidon, angry with the Phaiakians for giving safe convoy to all men, would strike one of their ships returning from convoy and fling a great mountain around the city. When the Phaiakians give Odysseus convoy home they quite knowingly take this risk, for Odysseus has certainly not represented himself as a favorite of Poseidon.

As the ship that gave Odysseus convoy to Ithaka is within sight of the city of the Phaiakians, Poseidon does indeed strike it. He turns the ship into stone and fixes it immovably in the water: the swift motion in which the Phaiakians delight has at last been stilled. Alkinoos recognizes what has happened as a fulfillment of the prophecy and hastens to offer sacrifice to Poseidon that he might take pity on them and not fling a mountain about their city. These prayers to Poseidon are the last we see of the Phaiakians. Theirs is the only unresolved fate in the *Odyssey*.

But can we say anything at all about what has happened to the Phaiakians on account of Odysseus' stay with them? When we first meet the Phaiakians the words Telemachus uses of his father in the first book of the *Odyssey* (1.243) could equally well be applied to them: they are *aistos*, *apustos*, unseen and unheard of. They live so far apart from other men that no one knows who they are. Homer tells us that their obscurity is deliberate; they became the furthest of men in order to be the safest of men. They fled to Scheria to escape the savage Cyclopes (6.6), but clearly also to escape from everyone else who might possibly harm them. Nausikaa says that the Phaiakians now have no cause to fear anyone (6.200-3): they lead a perfectly safe if unheroic existence.

They were outside of the heroic world and the risks that heroism entails. But with the arrival of Odysseus the heroic world has come to them, and they take the risk of participating in it. Zeus describes their giving convoy to Odysseus in language appropriate to heroism. He says that they did so "yielding to their might and strength." (13.143) The Phaiakians have entered into the heroic world; they have become part of the song that was so conspicuously missing at the feast of the suitors in book one. These great delighters in poetry have become part of the *nostos* of Odysseus.

And it is perhaps appropriate that we do not know their fate. The Phaiakians have taken a risk and entered into a story, and the whole risk of entering a story is that one can never know whether the end will finally be endurable or not.

God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob

Joe Sachs

One of the most difficult sentences in the Bible is in the fifth verse of the sixth chapter of *Genesis*: "And the Lord saw that . . . every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart was only evil continually." In Biblical usage, the heart is the place and source of all thought and purpose. The inward life of the human creature is thus said to be only and unceasingly evil, poisoned by imagination. But it is just this capacity for inward and imaginative thought that distinguishes man from the other creatures. Every genuinely human action proceeds from choice, and choice is only possible when an array of possibilities is first represented in the imagination. The less active, flexible, and free the imagination is, the more constrained and slavish will be the action. So it is the very power that makes us what we are that is said to make us evil, and indeed to make us unworthy to live, since the text of *Genesis* continues: "And it repented the Lord that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him at His heart. And the Lord said, 'I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the earth.'"

In carrying out this purpose of His heart, God would be blotting out His own image. Should we say that the image had been defiled because the medium in which it was placed had become corrupt? I think it is worse than that. The power for which we are condemned is the image of God. The Bible does not say in what way we carry that image, but the phrase "image of God" is linked with

our dominion over the animals and with our being created male and female. Now some animals dominate others, simply by force, and man is certainly not unusual among the animals for being made male and female. But a dominion which is not merely violent, and a sexuality which is not just a matter of coupling in response to desire, are possible to human beings because we are capable of thoughtfulness for others and for one another. That thoughtfulness, which is imagination freely exercised for the sake of the good of another as well as of oneself, is thus the image of God. How is it that it can be not only evil, but only evil continually?

It is easy to see that anything which depends on freedom can be misused. If not, it could not be properly used, freely. But why must the imagination always be misused? When the snake tells Eve that God is a liar, and is cheating her of good things because He wants to keep them to Himself, is she not free to say no to him? She is, but if she did so, it would be an answer based only on faith. She does not know that God's purposes are for her good. Where knowledge is lacking, imagination can always multiply possibilities. But why shift one's faith to the snake, and to the unknown benefits he promises? The snake is smart enough to give no reasons for distrusting God, and to give no content to his promises. "Your eyes shall be opened," he says, "and ye shall be as God, knowing good and evil." (3.5) All the work of persuasion is left to Eve's own imagination. If we cannot say why the persuasion will necessarily succeed, I think at least we all know that it must. If it didn't, Eve would not be our ancestor, but belong to some other race.

But the most telling display of the power of imagination comes after the fruit is eaten. The eyes of Adam and

Joe Sachs is a tutor at St. John's College in Annapolis. This is the text of a lecture given at St. John's in 1986, in October in Annapolis and in November in Santa Fe. It appears here by permission of *The Great Ideas Today*, a publication of the Great Books division of Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc.

Eve are indeed opened, but to what? "They knew that they were naked." What is happening here? Whatever it is takes place only in the imaginations of Adam and Eve, and can be discerned only in the imagination of the reader. Just before this moment, Eve had implicated Adam in her act, and just after it, Adam will try to shift all the blame onto her. Adam and Eve had been "one flesh," but now each has begun to treat the other as something to be used. The two look at each other, and neither likes the way it feels to be looked at in that way. Do you know that feeling—the feeling that comes when someone is looking at you with speculation? Adam and Eve cannot fail to know it, because each is experiencing it from both sides at the same time. Their response is the invention of clothes. They produce an imaginary safety, which is an outward sign of genuine inner barriers. Each has isolated himself by imagining how he might increase his own good at the expense of the other. It is to this new condition of solitary suspicion and distrust that their eyes are opened.

Here the power of imagination has already gone out of control. Each of the two human beings has imagined the possibility of selling out the other, and as a consequence, each has imagined as well that the other is imagining the same thing. Imagined wrongs become genuine threats, and, with the making of clothes, what had been only inner begins to have outward effects. Some readers of *Genesis* say that the snake was right when he said that Adam and Eve would not die when they ate the forbidden fruit. Perhaps that is when they became mortal, these lawyer-like readers say, but God said "in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," and we've got Him there. But God had also said that it is not good for man to be alone, and each human being has now begun considering that it might be better to be alone, to put his own good first and sacrifice the other to it. That possibility of separation immediately, and apparently uncontrollably, began becoming real. If Adam and Eve before that day had lived a life as one flesh, then surely on that day they did die: they died as one being and were re-born as two.

Perhaps that is the way in which the imagination is only evil. The imagining of bad possibilities is an experience which cannot be erased; it makes us different and may make our lives worse. On the other hand, the imagining of good possibilities (for example, that God intends our good) seems to require effort to sustain, and to be always vulnerable to suspicion. The imagination is the source of both suspicion and faith, and it always makes suspicion the line of least resistance. The imagination is the image of God and the source of our freedom, but it is a freedom weighted toward isolation.

It seems then that the power which is needed to make

life good tends by its own nature to make life bad. For example, my guess is that Abel was not a very interesting man, and not capable of much—that he was accepted for the little of which he was capable. It is his brother Cain, whose imagination leads to hurt feelings and murder, on whom God places a special mark of protection. Cain is cursed (is the first human being to be cursed), but his life is preserved, as presumably Abel's life could have been protected and preserved but wasn't. Throughout the Bible, it is the murderers, like Moses and David, and the thieves, like Jacob, on whom God's care is lavished. On the interpretation I am offering, the image of God is more fully present in Cain than in Abel, though also at greater risk of being perverted and destroyed. It is Cain who builds the first city, and it is his descendants who first make musical instruments and tools. But it is also Lamech, Cain's descendant in the fifth generation, whose song is preserved (4.23-4): "I have slain a man for wounding me, and a young man for bruising me; if Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy and sevenfold."

Can such a creature as man be saved from becoming what he thinks he wants to be? Command and punishment have been present since the first generation, but still the tormented murderer Cain has been succeeded by the self-satisfied and boastful murderer Lamech. It is another Lamech who is the father of Noah, but the first Lamech typifies the world God judges too far gone in violence and corruption to be allowed to endure. (6.11-13) Lamech not only kills, but glories in the slightness of the pretext for killing; he takes joy in multiplying in his imagination those whom he will kill for offenses which have not yet happened. By destroying others, he has built himself up into a mighty man of renown. (6.4) The human creature, left to itself, degenerates into this Cyclops-like being who boasts of being a law to himself.

What does God give to the human creature to protect it from its own deadly inertia? The answer, I think, is threefold. God gives man a history, a covenant, and a Law, and the third cannot be understood apart from the first two. Some might think that the Law of Moses is simply a list of explicit prohibitions and commands meant to replace or at least hold back the imagination. On such an interpretation, the Jew need never make his own choices or risk his own judgment since everything he need ever do is spelled out in the hundreds of laws of the Torah. Now I hope to show that this is a misunderstanding of the Jewish Law, and in fact almost an inversion of it, but even if it were not, it would be no solution to the difficulty posed by the first six chapters of *Genesis*. If the faculty of imagination were beaten down in us, made powerless in our lives, the creation would be diminished, void of the image of God, and stunted at the

level of the things that creep on the earth. The Flood is not a curtailment of the creation but a renewal and affirmation of it. It is the beginning of history, and the occasion of the first covenant.

God's first deed in the newly-washed world of Noah is to declare that He will never again destroy this world. This commitment on God's part is the covenant with Noah. Although God also gives two laws to Noah and his descendants, and although the word for covenant means a contract for which pledges are exchanged between two parties, it is of the utmost importance to see that God's promise is in no way conditional upon any performance or promise on man's part. The covenant is spelled out over nine verses (9.9-17) as repetitious and emphatic as anything in the Bible. Mankind will never be destroyed under any circumstances. In order to see that this promise is not conditioned by man's observance of the law requiring capital punishment for murderers, one need only look at the reason given for the promise in chapter 8, verse 21. Mankind will forever be spared because "the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth." The reason for the covenant of universal forgiveness is identical to the reason given in the sixth chapter for universal condemnation and destruction. Human evil is pardoned, because it is in us from youth, that is, from before the time when we are responsible: it is our native condition. Whatever the purpose of the laws already given and to be given, they are not the price of the divine protection of human life. The rainbow is like the mark of Cain, placed now upon the whole human race. It says: this criminal has forfeited his right to live, but that life will be maintained by something stronger than his deserving.

The sixth chapter of *Genesis* is often seen as the strongest evidence for the inconstancy of God in the Bible. He repents of the creation, reverses Himself, and destroys what He had made. Then in chapter 8, God reverses Himself again. Does the second reversal double the evidence of inconstancy? Or does it cancel it? The underlying reason for the perpetual pardon of mankind is the same as the underlying reason for its destruction. That is why the world after the Flood is not a new order of things, but an affirmation of the original creation. It is all right that the imagination of man's heart is evil; he was made that way. That is not the flaw that shows creation to be faulty, but part of the design. God's twice reversing Himself, on account of one unchanging reason, shows that neither He nor His relation to his creatures has undergone a change. Mankind after the Flood differs from mankind in Eden in only one way. He does not have a different heart; he has a history.

It is possible to look at the God of the Bible as a bumbler, trying first one thing and then another in an effort

to undo the unforeseen consequences of His past mistakes. But what if God's relationship with the human creature were fully formed from the beginning, but man, from his side, could only come into possession of that relationship by acquiring a history? God will send Abraham to a mountain to kill his son. Abraham will return with Isaac alive and unwounded, but for the rest of his life Abraham himself will have an unforgettable history. That episode is called a test or trial of Abraham (22.1), but for whose sake is he tested? An unconditional and irrevocable covenant has already been made with Abraham (12.1-3, 13.14-17, 15.18-20, 17.4-14), and its fulfillment depends upon the existence of Isaac. (17.19) Therefore God knows both that Abraham will pass the test and that he will not kill Isaac. Abraham is changed in order to become what God already knows him to be. The only difference after the test is that Abraham has come to know about himself some of what God already knew.

History then is like a lens through which man can see himself and God. A human covenant is an attempt to determine an unknown and uncertain future by two parties who bind themselves mutually to bring it about. What then can be the meaning of a covenant between man and God? The first use of the word, for the covenant with Noah, is in a context which emphasizes the absence of the mutuality which is ordinarily the essence of all covenants. When the great covenant is made with Abraham, it is set out in the form of an exchange. In return for the promised land and a multitude of nations and blessings, Abraham must circumcise all the males of his household. (17.9-14) But the ritual of circumcision is not a return made to God, but a sign of the acceptance of His promise. If the circumcision fulfilled Abraham's side of the contract, it would make no sense for him to be put through the test of the sacrifice of Isaac, in which he is asked to destroy the possibility of the fulfillment of God's side of the bargain. When Abraham lifts the knife on the mountain in Moriah, he is abandoning any humanly intelligible role in bringing about the things promised him by God. My suggestion is that it is only at that moment that Abraham appropriates the covenant. That is the moment when he knows that he did not enter into the relationship with God simply for the sake of the things God would give him, since in asking for Isaac's life, God is saying in effect "Give back everything I have given you and any possibility of ever getting any more of it." God already knew that Abraham's side of the covenant was nothing but his believing it (15.6): "Abraham believed in the Lord, and He counted it to him for righteousness." After the test on the mountain Abraham knew those same things about himself: both how strongly he believed and that his belief was the only thing he had to offer God.

The change of his name from Abram to Abraham is an indication that the man with whom the covenant is made does not yet exist when the covenant is first announced. Abraham cannot see who God is or what God is asking of him until his own life has unfolded sufficiently. In that way, divine covenant is inseparable from human history. And that is why the covenant of forgiveness with Noah can only be made with a human race that knows of the destruction in the Flood and of the violence and corruption that preceded it.

Noah and his descendants possess a world which does not differ from the one given to Adam and Eve, but to Noah's generation that world is seen refracted through its history. The world after the Flood can be seen as a possession that could have been lost, that almost was lost and was only spared by the free choice of its creator. But how does that differ from a world that might not have been made, and only came into being by the free act of creation? It differs only in being more fully known for what it is. It is with the knowers, the inheritors of a history, that God first makes a covenant. Similarly, Isaac is no different after Abraham's ordeal on the mountain, but to Abraham he must have become more precious as a son who could have been lost, but was spared by the free act of God. But Isaac was already a miraculous son, given to Abraham and Sarah when they were far beyond the natural capacity for child-bearing. Again, Abraham's history only makes Isaac more fully known for the free gift he is, the Abraham has come to know this truth with excruciating vividness. It has been pointed out to many of us by Mr. Littleton that the word love occurs first in the Bible when Abraham is commanded to kill his son: "Take now thy son, thine only son, whom thou lovest." (22.2) Perhaps the creation, or the bringing to sight, of human love also occurs first in the giving and re-giving of Isaac with a joy and a pain beyond any in the power of nature. The covenant that promises that the world will endure is made with a generation that knows not to take the world for granted, and the covenant that promises the blessing of descendants is made with an Abraham who knows not to take a child for granted. Those with whom covenants are made have been given the chance to know themselves and the things they have as creations of a creator. That, I think, is always the meaning of covenant in the Bible: the discovery and acknowledgment of createdness.

This meaning of covenant is best exemplified in the history of Jacob. As with so many of the things we have looked at, this point is revealed by first seeming to be its opposite. The covenant between God and Jacob is first made at Beth-el, when Jacob is on his way east toward the home of his uncle, in the land from which Abraham had departed. It is worth listening to every word of it.

God speaks to Jacob in a dream, saying (28.13-15),

"I am the Lord, the God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac. The land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it and to thy seed. And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south. And in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee whithersoever thou goest, and will bring thee back into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of."

Jacob awoke, and "vowed a vow, saying," (vv. 20-22)

"If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come back to my father's house in peace, then shall the Lord be my God, and this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God's house; and of all that Thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto Thee."

Here, surely, is a man of imagination. Where Abraham believed, Jacob spells out terms and conditions. Where Abraham did just what he was told to do, Jacob offers extra inducements, to hold God to his bargain.

It is not the case that Abraham never bargained with God. There is the obvious instance of the dialogue over Sodom and Gomorrah (18.17-33), in which Abraham artfully drives down to ten the number of righteous people needed to save his nephew's life. And there is a less obvious moment when Abraham, having laughed at the thought that his ninety-year-old wife and hundred-year-old self would produce another child, tries to talk God into substituting Ishmael for the promised son. (17.18) Indeed, in his defense of Sodom, Abraham challenges God to His face, asking "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do justly?" Like Adam, Cain, Moses, and David, Abraham does not submit to God without a struggle. But what we see in Jacob at Beth-el is something utterly unlike any such challenge or struggle. Open conflict seems to bring men closer to God, but Jacob holds himself apart. Though he is afraid at Beth-el, he is cool with God, and keeps his wits about him in an effort to protect himself from any fraud on God's part. And Jacob has reason to be cautious. God speaks to him about his seed, while Jacob is running for his life; God makes promises about all the families of the earth, when Jacob doesn't know if he can ever see his own family again. Abraham had also been at Beth-el (12.8), but heading west, toward God's promise. Jacob is there heading east, running away from the mess he has made of his life. The covenant has been announced to him, and Jacob has vowed a vow, but at this point in his life, the covenant with Jacob has not yet come into being.

The turning point in Jacob's life does not occur when he is at Beth-el, but seven years, one month, and one day

later, on the morning after his wedding. What God's appearing to him did not accomplish, Laban's deception of him does. Jacob had been successful at extortion, with his brother, fraud, with his father, and petty legalism, with God. Now, for the first time and all at once, he is a victim of all three at the hands of his uncle. The most surprising thing, to one who has followed the story of Jacob to this point, is that he lets himself be taken advantage of. The moment when he does so is like the moment when Adam and Eve look at each other and make clothes, in that the Biblical text gives us not one word about what fills that moment, or about what causes the next thing that happens to come out of it. The crucial event again takes place only in the imagination of the character, and again can only be discerned by the imagination of the reader. We have to back up a bit, to try to see the context of that moment whole.

Jacob begins life with a brother who is older than he, stronger, and preferred by their father. Against these disadvantages are set the facts that Jacob is cleverer than Esau, preferred by their mother, and unhampered in the pursuit of his own advantage by any respect for justice. We first hear him speak when he gives voice to an inspiration that shows the quality of his imagination. (25.31,33) Esau has, from birth, the rights of the first-born, but Jacob has at this moment food, and his brother is very hungry. Why not extort the former by withholding the latter?, thinks the man who will be so artful at drawing up a covenant. If Esau wants food badly enough right now, let him first swear away his birthright forever. Esau agrees, and Jacob discovers that even the weaker can be a successful bully. Jacob now has everything his brother was entitled to by law and custom, and lacks only what his father has the power to give by free choice out of love. His mother Rebekah thinks of a way for him to steal even that, and Jacob is quick-witted enough to carry it off. Just as his brother's hunger offered an opportunity for advantage-taking to an imaginative man, his father's blindness can now be the making of Jacob. He can set out in the world with everything, except trust.

There is only one moment in the swindling of his father for which Jacob is unprovided by his mother. (27.20) When Isaac asks how he had found venison so quickly, Jacob immediately has an answer: the Lord your God helped me. This is a remarkable answer, seizing upon Isaac's trust in God as another weapon against him, along with his blindness, and quietly urging him to get on with the blessing, since so far this Lord is only Isaac's God. The story of Jacob's first theft, of Esau's birthright, ends with the sentence, "So Esau despised his birthright." (25.34) This means, one presumes, that Esau thought so little of the birthright that it was worth no more to him than a bowl of lentil soup. There is no way to absolve

Jacob from injustice in the exchange, since it is not an Esau free from duress who agrees to it, but one in whom hunger is used for torment by a brother's cruelty. Still, the magnitude of the crime is lessened if the loss was not very important to Esau. But in the case of this second theft the same argument would have to work the opposite way. It is Isaac's caring so much about the blessing in God's covenant that Jacob uses to strengthen his hold over his blind father. The story of Jacob's second theft could fittingly end, "So Jacob despised his father."

It is easy to despise Isaac, or to overlook him altogether. He is present at what is perhaps the most sublime moment in the Bible, but as a child and at the wrong end of a knife. In the trial of Abraham, Isaac in no way acts. In the first episode in which Isaac attempts to act, his efforts are useless. (26.1-12) In a time of famine, Isaac goes to the king of the Philistines, attempting to protect himself by calling his wife his sister. If some Philistine wanted Rebekah, and knew her to be married, he might kill her husband. But Abraham has been there before Isaac, and used the same deception with the same king. Abimelech had been in danger on account of Sarah (Ch.20), and now avoids trouble by protecting Isaac, who gets what he wants in spite of his utter ineffectuality, because of the memory of his father. At this same time God renews the covenant with Isaac, but says He is doing so for Abraham's sake. (26.5,24) A brief series of wanderings and troubles then ends at Beersheba, which Isaac so names to signify that he has found water and a place to rest only by good fortune. (26.32-3) And that is the whole story of Isaac's life, up to the crowning humiliation in his old age at the hands of his wife and his son Jacob. There was a time when I wondered at the expression, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Why does the ordinariness and incompetence of Isaac merit a place equal to those of his father and son in the naming of God?

It was Mr. Littleton who pointed me in the direction of an answer. What does Isaac do when he discovers that he has been fooled and betrayed? He blesses Jacob again, this time deliberately and voluntarily. (28.3-4) If I am correct that there is a moment in the life of each of the patriarchs when he makes the covenant his own, it must be this moment of forgiveness in which Isaac does so. Isaac's one free and effective act in the account we are given of him is an acknowledgement that he cannot act at his own caprice. Esau is his first born and the son he loves, but he will not be the heir of God's promise. To some extent, Isaac undoes Jacob's crimes by saying yes to their result. Acting now from knowledge and choice, Isaac gives Jacob what Jacob had first stolen from him. But the pardon is not complete, because Esau does not participate in it, and he is the one of those wronged by Jacob. Esau in fact feels that nothing will satisfy him but killing

Jacob, and goes so far as to hope for Isaac's death, to let him feel free to do the killing. (27.41) Even in his murderous rage, Esau has more respect for his father's feelings than Jacob ever had.

Jacob passes through Beth-el and travels to his uncle's home far to the east near what is now Iraq, to escape his brother. His mother thinks it will only take a few days for Esau to forget what Jacob has done to him. (27.44-5) Jacob does not share her optimism, for after a month with his uncle he proposes that he spend another seven years working for him as the price of marrying Laban's daughter Rachel, with whom Jacob is already in love. (29.18) Why does Jacob make this offer? He is certainly a man who knows how to get important things cheaply. He got his brother's birthright for a bowl of soup and his father's blessing for a lie, and he offered God absolutely nothing until God should first give him everything he wanted: a safe and comfortable journey and return home. Now he freely offers seven years of work for a woman he already desires. Can it be that he is simply trying to make certain of outlasting Esau's anger? That can't be the whole reason, since he could be spending that same time as Rachel's husband. I suspect that Jacob is offering those seven years more to himself than to Laban, that he wants a long time to forget about looking out for himself, to submerge himself in work, out of which he might emerge as a better man to begin a life with Rachel. I think this is not as far-fetched an interpretation as it might at first seem. When Jacob first comes into the presence of Rachel and Laban he weeps tears of relief and gratitude (29.11-13), and this is after a journey of five hundred miles or more in which, perhaps for the first time in his life, Jacob must have known deprivation, fear, and uncertainty. Just as Tolstoy's Pierre found no true freedom with the largest private fortune in Russia and the best education available in Europe until he had discovered in prison what a human being is, so too may Jacob's journey have been the beginning of his growing up. But the best evidence that Jacob's servitude was a freely chosen penance is the way he acts when it is over.

We have finally returned to Laban's deception of Jacob, and Jacob's un-deception the morning after. We have now to try to enter Jacob's imagination when, having discovered that he married and slept with Leah, he confronts Laban. (29.25-6) "What is this that thou has done unto me? did not I serve with thee for Rachel? wherefore then hast thou beguiled me?" are the questions that come tumbling from Jacob's mouth. Listen to Laban's cool reply, and try to hear in it what Jacob must be hearing. "It is not so done in our place, to give the younger before the first-born." Do you hear it? To a Jacob who was still the shallow and unfeeling thief of his younger days, this would be a lame excuse and nothing more. To a Jacob

whose thoughts are full of the wrong he has done his older brother in his own place, Laban's words must be like a knife that stabs him to the heart. Does Laban know what Jacob has done at home? Do his words mean, "I have not injured you but given you exact justice for your crimes"? It is certainly possible that in all that time word might have come to Laban from some traveller or servant or Jacob himself of what Jacob had done. But it does not matter. Even if Laban does not know fully what he is doing, it is done with exquisite accuracy. A marriage with Laban's undesirable daughter has been extorted from Jacob, as Esau's birthright from him; the consummation of that marriage has been achieved by disguise and fraud, as the first giving of Isaac's blessing was achieved; and Jacob has been outwitted in his contract, as he sought to outwit God at Beth-el with codicils and loopholes. In the face of this triple humiliation, our resourceful Jacob—accepts it. He takes it, as we say, like a man. In this moment of passivity and failure Jacob is for the first time as much a man as his father was.

I have called this moment the turning point in Jacob's life. It is not, however, the occasion of a life-long sacrifice, since the customs of the time permit Jacob a second wife, and he marries Rachel only a week later. Nor is it the occasion of a complete change of Jacob's character, since he eventually comforts himself with a lot of petty cheating of Laban. (30.25-32.3) Thirdly, it is not the moment when Jacob appropriates the divine covenant; that is an unmistakable event thirteen years later. The moment when Jacob stands before Laban and hears his mockery is the first time we see Jacob swallow his pride. Jacob has already acknowledged his fault, according to our reading of the story, but he now accepts that the working off of that fault will not be a matter of his own private arrangements with himself, answerable to no one else. When Laban says, in effect, "You can have Rachel too, but I'll take seven more years," we hear only, "And Jacob did so." (29.28) Like his father and grandfather before him, Jacob has begun to accept that it is not he who directs his own life, and to be willing to live on terms other than his own.

Jacob sets out for home after spending twenty years with Laban, seven for Leah, as it turned out, seven more for Rachel, and six more to earn livestock and servants. (31.41) Near the River Jordan he camps at Peniel, having sent half his followers to another encampment, while he waits to meet Esau, and perhaps to be killed. The second thing Jacob does at Peniel is to send a succession of messengers carrying gifts to Esau; the first and third things he does there are the interesting ones. Taken together, they replace the covenant at Beth-el, of Jacob's eastward journey. This time it is Jacob who initiates the encounter, and again we will listen to all his words, as he prays

(32.10-13):

"O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, O Lord, who saidst unto me: Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will do thee good; I am not worthy of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which Thou hast shown unto Thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two camps. Deliver me, I pray Thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau; for I fear him lest he come and smite me, the mother with the children. And Thou saidst: I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude."

Jacob's prayer at Peniel is certainly self-regarding, self-serving, and self-seeking. The important thing about it is that it is a *prayer*. Jacob reminds God of His promise, but does not claim to have made any exchange for it or promise to make any return for it. He speaks now as one who has nothing to offer but his need. When Jacob says he is unworthy of the mercy and truth he has received, he is using a way of speaking fairly common in the Bible, the Oriental courtesy of self-abasement. It is not a way of speaking we have ever heard from Jacob, though, and in this case I think he means exactly what he says. There is much good in his life, two wives, eleven children, and great wealth, and it is all sheer blessing, and not his own doing. There is also more than enough bad in his life, enough to cost him his life and perhaps the massacre of all his family and dependents, and that is his doing and just what he deserves. There is none of the spelling out of obligations of the covenant at Beth-el, but only a giving voice to the conviction that he himself cannot provide himself the minimum conditions of carrying on a life.

Having sent his prayer to God, and presents to his brother, Jacob that night sends away his family and everyone and everything else with him, and spends the night alone. (32.23-5) But when Jacob isolates himself, he is not alone. We are told, abruptly and mysteriously, "there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day." Abraham struggled with God face-to-face over Sodom and over Ishmael, and something similar occurs with Adam, Cain, Moses, and David. It is in the strange and beautiful episode of Jacob's wrestling that the meaning of all such struggles becomes accessible. I am not talking about symbolism, but about how and to what end the wrestling match takes place.

Let us first simply look at what happens in that struggle at Peniel. We know that the wrestling match goes on all night, that Jacob continues despite a serious injury, either a sprained thigh muscle or a dislocated hip, that his adversary is called a man in the narration but is taken by Jacob himself to be God, and that Jacob is striving not to throw or pin this adversary or in any way get the bet-

ter of Him, but only to remain in His embrace. Jacob fights in order that he not be let go, except with a blessing. If the wrestling match is taken together with Jacob's prayer, it provides further evidence that Jacob's honest opinion is that all the good in his life comes only from God, and that if he stands on his own merit, he deserves to be killed by his brother. And this finally is the full meaning of the Biblical covenant: It is the bargain one can make only out of utter clarity that he has nothing to bargain with. The fierceness of Jacob's struggle reflects the knowledge he has gained of the desperation of a life without God. Anything he could hope for without God, he has learned that he doesn't want. And this moment is Jacob's full and final appropriation of the covenant, his explicit acknowledgement of his createdness, his essential and inescapable dependence upon a creator. The meaning of the moment is recognized by the change of Jacob's name to Israel, he who strives with God. And Jacob becomes Israel also in the sense that none of his progeny will be excluded from the covenant: he is the blessed nation promised to his grandfather and father. In this way, Jacob's wrestling is the completion of creation: the separation of light from darkness, land from water, family from family, and brother from brother comes to an end after thirty-two chapters of *Genesis*.

If Jacob's wrestling is the culmination of the history of creation, it must somehow address the troublesome sentence with which we began: "And the Lord saw that . . . every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart was only evil continually." That sentence was interpreted to mean that the instrument of human freedom has an inherent inertia toward making its worst suspicions come true by actions intended to guard against them. The history of mankind before the Flood was summarized as a motion from the self-tormenting murderer Cain to the self-congratulating mass murderer Lamech. The three Hebrew patriarchs do not have purified hearts; what they have are ordeals which lead to self-knowledge as created beings, and trust in a divine promise of prosperity and a rest from troubles, but not for themselves. It is natural for all human beings to want something for themselves, in the present. Esau asks his father if he does not have a little blessing left over for him (27.36); Lot, escaping from Sodom, asks God if he can't stay in a city, just a little one (19.20); and Abraham meets the first explicit account of the covenant with a request that a little something be done for Ishmael (17.18). But none of the patriarchs is given anything out of the ordinary in his own lifetime, except an invitation to trust God. The history of mankind after the Flood, up to the coming into being of the nation Israel, is a return to self-torment, but relieved by a promise of peace for future generations. The covenant does not transform the conditions of human life,

but it presents itself as a step toward such a transformation.

Jacob's life after he becomes Israel is still full of trouble. He has a life, because Esau does forgive him (33.4), but he himself seems to have learned nothing from his conflict with his brother. Like his father before him, Jacob openly loves one of his sons most, and brings about hatred in his house. (37.1-4) As a result he loses that son, and then the son second dearest to him. When he is reunited with them in Egypt, he is brought before the Pharaoh, who asks him, "How many are the days of the years of thy life?" Jacob replies, "The days of the years of my sojournings are a hundred and thirty years; few and evil have been the days of the years of my life, and they have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their sojournings." (47.8-9) Why does Jacob talk this way? Is he a bitter man at the end of his life? Does he feel that God's promise has been a deception? His words in the following chapter make it clear that this is not his attitude toward his life. When Jacob is on his deathbed, he hugs and kisses his grandchildren and says to Joseph, "I had not thought to see thy face; and lo, God hath let me see thy children also." (48.11) Jacob does not lack gratitude. Pharaoh seems to look at him though as an aged man specially favored by fortune. I think what Jacob is saying to him is: I am no one special. I am an ordinary man. Others have lived longer. If I am distinguished in any way it is in the same way as my father and grandfather, in not having had a life at all in the settled sense, but a never-ending wandering.

Did Jacob receive the things he insisted upon at Beth-el? He certainly did not starve or freeze to death, he got back to Beersheba, and he was not attacked. In deeper ways, though, he got both more and less than he asked for. Safety is too weak a word to describe what Jacob gained when he looked on Esau's forgiving face and said it was like seeing the face of God. (33.10) On the other hand, home is too strong a word for a place Jacob had to leave in his old age, not only for food but for release from the anxiety about his children with which his last years were troubled; and I doubt that Jacob would have been much comforted to know that the Egyptians gave him a royal funeral. (50.2-3) For Jacob, home and security remained only promises for a distant generation, while the joys of his life always came unexpectedly, with the intensity of gifts that one cannot take for granted. And what became of the imagination of Jacob's youth, in which he set himself against everyone and everything else in the world? It seems to have been not overcome or crushed, but fed by the knowledge he gained from experience and promises he was given by God. The Jacob who warns Pharaoh against envying him is not a man

in whom imagination has died. It is in his imagination that Jacob judges his life as one that has never come to rest. That is a long way, though, from the time when that same imagination sought to find its rest by defeating and outwitting everyone else. Jacob's imagination looks at the past through his history and at the future through the divine covenant, and finds an in-between, human kind of rest in the acceptance of troubles as worth enduring.

The Law of Moses incorporates Jacob's understanding of his life. The Jew is commanded to recite, every year when the harvest comes, the words "a wandering Aramean was my father." (*Deuteronomy* 26.5) A land flowing with milk and honey is never to be taken for granted, but to be looked on as achieved through a history of struggle. But is the land the completion of the promise made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? Why is the promised land not a new Eden, and just as likely to be lost? Is memory strong enough to outweigh the corrupting tendency of imagination simply by evoking the history and the covenant? I will argue that the life of the wandering Aramean, the Syrian nomad, is transposed from the outer to the inner human realm by means of the Law itself.

I once listened to a learned man explain that the Jewish Law contained nothing spiritual, that it concerned itself exclusively with external possessions and outward acts. This man went so far as to claim that the Hebrew word translated "covet" in the tenth commandment means instead "obtain by magic," but I cannot recall that he had anything at all to say about the command in *Leviticus* to love your neighbor as yourself. (19.18,33-4) His purpose was to show the inferiority of Judaism to Christianity, but I have also heard more than one rabbi explain that the superiority of Judaism consists precisely in its concentration on the outer things under a man's control, rather than on the inner and involuntary things. It seems to me, though, that the regulation of outward life in the Jewish Law is always for the sake of its significance for inward life. The keynote of the whole Law is sounded in the command to the hearer to talk about the law all the time, whenever one is free from necessary business. (*Deuteronomy* 6.6-7) It is not a Law to be memorized, but one to be interpreted. It does not bring the life of moral struggle to an end, but stimulates that life. Most of what the Law has to give is not on its surface, but evident only to the imagination, through the activity of interpretation. The ultimate Biblical response to the corruption of human life by imagination is the giving of the Law, not to replace the imagination but to feed it with strong meat.

Now some of you may be thinking, that sounds good, and there are some good things in the Law of Moses, but isn't much of the Law unenlightened and even barbaric? For example, doesn't that Law approve of slavery? The

Law does not forbid slavery, and certainly recognizes its existence, but as far as I can determine, every mention of slavery in the five books of Moses deals with the freeing of slaves. The most extensive ordinances deal with Jewish slaves, who must be set free after six years of work (Ex. 21, Deut. 15), liberally furnished with livestock, grain, and wine (D 15.13-14). Most remarkable is that the slave owner is commanded not only to free the slave, but not to do so grudgingly. (D 15.18) Further, any slave, Jewish or otherwise, is exempt from the famous law of retaliation, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. This is true in one way in the Code of Hammurabi, a Babylonian king contemporary with Abraham: there the eye or tooth of a slave is worth less than that of a man, but requires a payment of money to the slave's owner. (Laws 196-201) Presumably the slave's owner is free to knock out eyes and teeth as long as the slave has eyes and teeth to knock out. But in the Law of Moses, the slave's eye or tooth is worth his freedom: a slave owner who strikes his slave must set him free for the eye's sake, or for the tooth's sake. (E 21.26-7) And every fiftieth year is a jubilee year in which all slaves must be set free. (Lev. 25.54)

Slavery in the Bible, then, is a limited institution, with laws made to mitigate its harshness. But we have yet to consider the most interesting of those limitations, the law concerning runaway slaves. Again, for the sake of contrast, we mention the Code of Hammurabi, under which anyone harboring a runaway slave was to be killed. (Law 16) In our enlightened times, this was not a capital offense, but still the United States Constitution required that anyone held to forced labor in one state had to be returned from any other state. (Art. 4, Sec. 2) And in the nineteenth century, Congress passed a law under which a federal judge was paid twice as much when he found an accused person to be a runaway slave as when he let him go. The law preventing slaves from running away follows simply from the logic of the institution of slavery itself. If someone can choose with his feet not to be a slave, and the law does not compel him to return, he is no slave in the first place. A law permitting a slave to escape his servitude is bad law and bad logic. Listen to the Biblical law on the subject: "Thou shalt not deliver unto his master a bondsman that is escaped from his master unto thee; he shall dwell with thee, in the midst of thee, in the place which he shall choose within one of thy gates, where it liketh him best; thou shalt not wrong him." (D 23.16-17) Any slave who doesn't want to be a slave, and who can run away, is no longer a slave, but is protected by the law. Is not the very institution of slavery undermined by this little restriction? Why then does the Law not explicitly forbid slavery? What is the attitude toward slavery implicit in the Law? Think about it, as the sixth chapter of *Deuteronomy* requires.

The logic of slavery, that leads to the duty of returning a runaway slave, is the same as the logic of war, that leads to conscription. If war is right and the nation is at war, individuals cannot be permitted to refrain from fighting by their own choice. If we are at all on the right track in understanding the Law, then, we should expect to find military conscription absent or even forbidden, and this is just what we do find. There is one law in *Deuteronomy* that forbids a man to go into battle during his first year of marriage, and commands him to stay home and make his wife happy. (24.6) Mr. O'Grady used to comment that this law has no provision for cases when there are not enough soldiers left. It is unconditional in choosing the happiness of a young bride as a higher end than victory in battle. Let us listen to the general law governing the conduct of battle (D 20.5-8):

"The officers shall speak unto the people, saying: 'What man is there that hath built a new house and hath not dedicated it? let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man dedicate it. And what man is there that hath planted a vineyard, and hath not used the fruit thereof? let him go and return unto his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man use the fruit thereof. And what man is there that hath betrothed a wife, and hath not taken her? let him go and return unto his house, lest he die in battle, and another man take her.' And the officers shall speak further unto the people, and they shall say: 'What man is there that is fearful and faint-hearted? let him go and return unto his house, lest his brethren's heart melt as his heart.'"

Not only a new wife, but also a fiancée, a new house, and a new vineyard have higher claims on a man than does any battle, but again there is one further restriction that seems to undermine the whole institution of war. Under the Jewish Law, no one can be a soldier if he doesn't want to. The Bible is full of bloody warfare, and even glorifies it, and in certain special cases forbids humane treatment of the enemy. (D.20.16-18) These things can be defended, but are still disturbing to most of us. But anyone who was thus disturbed in his heart in Biblical times would, under the Law, be automatically exempt from fighting. Under such a law, the Vietnam war probably could not have been fought, but there is no such calculation in the Bible. Does the Bible teach the rightness of war?

In the third place, let us consider usury, the lending of money at interest. The Bible in no way restricts this practice, so long as the borrower is not a Jew or a resident alien. (D 15.3, 6; 23.21) From a fellow Jew, no form of interest in goods or money in any amount may ever be taken. (D 23.20) Usury is permissible in foreign commerce, but never to be part of the life of one's own community. Within the community one may lend, and accept a pledge as collateral for repayment, but with three restrictions: a mill or millstone may never be taken as a

pledge, since without it a man may not turn his crop into bread (D 24.6); if the pledge is a garment, the lender must return it to the borrower every night, since he may have no other covering to sleep under (D 24.12-13; E 22.25-6); and under no circumstances is the lender to go into the borrower's house to choose the article to be taken in pledge, but he must wait outside and take what he is given (D 24.10-11). The necessity to borrow from one's neighbor must, under the Law, have no cost in money or goods, in hardships the lender might be unable to foresee, or even in embarrassment. But the most remarkable provision for the borrower is a law requiring that all debts be cancelled every seven years. (D 15.1-11) Here is what the Law says to the lender:

"If there be among you a needy man, one of thy brethren, within any of thy gates, in thy land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thy heart, nor shut thy hand from thy needy brother; but thou shalt surely open thy hand unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need in that which he wanteth. Beware that there be not a base thought in thy heart, saying: 'The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand;' and thine eye be evil against thy needy brother, and thou give him nought; . . . Thou shalt surely give him, and thy heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him."

This law is not only for the protection of the poor; it seems even more strongly concerned with protecting the rich man against his own feelings. Perhaps one might say of all three, slavery, war, and usury, that they are all right, so long as one does not think that they are all right.

A fourth institution provided for in *Deuteronomy* is monarchy. (17.14-20) For about a thousand years from the time of the patriarchs, Israel has no king, but the Law foresees a desire for one when the people reach the promised land. The Law authorizes a king, so long as he does not multiply for himself horses, wives, or gold and silver, if he copies out the Torah for himself and reads it all his life. He is to be a king without pride over his subjects, regarding himself primarily as a subject of God. Does the Law sanction monarchy, or make it impossible?

The last institution I will ask you to consider is private property. You will not be surprised to hear that in the Bible it is neither forbidden nor simply approved, but is a qualified legal right. A tenth of every year's income must be set aside, in part for celebration, and in part for the use of priests, strangers, widows, and orphans. (D 14.22-29) But the amount from which the tenth is taken is not everything that grows in a man's fields. When one harvests grain, olives, or grapes, one may not glean his fields. (D 24.19-22) Something must always be left behind for the needy. And at any time of year, anyone may enter the vineyard of another and eat his fill, so long as he carries nothing away, and may take away from another man's cornfield everything he can pluck with his hand.

(23.25-6) We must conclude that the produce of a man's own land belongs to him, as long as he doesn't take all of it or use all that he takes, and that it belongs also to everyone else, as long as they do not abuse that right.

At this point, I think it is safe to conclude that the effect of the Jewish Law is not to settle the questions of the moral life, but to unsettle them. This does not mean that the Law is vague about how people should act, or leaves loopholes for the clever to escape its requirements, or even, God forbid, fosters a belief that morality is only relative. On the contrary, the Law is so clear about where obligations begin and end that it reveals an unmistakable two-sidedness in anything that purports to be the principle or end of human life. Some discussions of morals and politics are doctrinaire, deducing actions rigidly from formal principles. The Bible exhibits a treatment of human things of another kind, a kind which one finds also in Plato's dialogues and Aristotle's *Ethics*. This non-formal approach requires the exercise of judgment, the drawing of lines, and the balancing of conflicting goods. It is the opposite of irrational, but it does not restrict itself to conclusions accessible in the understanding by logic; its proper instrument is the imagination. When we hear in a political or moral discussion, as we do every day, that some conclusion follows because otherwise, "where do you draw the line?" the speaker is doing no more than confess the inadequacy of his imagination to the topic before him. The formalistic approach to human things is always an evasion of everything that matters to us.

On the contrary, the Law of Moses is full of everything human, including war, slavery, and every gradation of political and economic oppression. Its purpose is not to wipe out these evils—that could only be accomplished by wiping out us, their authors—but to provide ammunition for a never-ending struggle against them. Jacob's wanderings in the Syrian desert were for him and for his descendants the primary characteristic of his life. It was the promise of rest in the divine covenant that made such a life acceptable. But the covenant is not a literal promise of earthly peace and prosperity. Moses knew this when he said both "there will be no poor among you . . . if only you will obey the voice of the Lord your God," and also "the poor will never cease out of the land." (D 15.4-5, 11) The purpose of the Law, as of the covenant, is to prevent a coming to rest in the wrong place. This is not to say that the Law cannot be obeyed, but that there is no such thing as a completion of such obedience. The more one succeeds in obeying it, the more this Law opens the imagination to the more that still needs to be done. This is not an infinite process that makes all striving futile, but one that makes striving ever more effective. Such striving toward an end reflects the strife, in any thoughtful human being, of the imagination with itself.

On Beginning to Read Dante

Cary Stickney

It seems to me that the question at the root of this lecture is about what is same and what is other. I will try to give some meaning to that empty-sounding pair of words. In Aristotle's book called *On the Soul* there is the suggestion that learning is like nutrition. This means that things which look very different from us are able to form a part of us. Our soul can transform bread into bone and muscle, and in an analogous way can transform the things in the world into thought and knowledge. Of course the bread must already somehow *be* bone and muscle, even if only potentially, and the beings in the world must already somehow *be* thought. It turns out that the most knowable aspects of all things are indeed in their essence nothing but thought, the thought of *nous poiêtikos*, Active Mind, which continually thinks all things and precisely by this divine and pure activity makes them what they are. There must then be some part of the human soul that resembles this Divine Mind, if the soul is to be capable of truly knowing anything at all. But this is to suppose that we are different only in degree from God, not in kind. Aristotle seems to take very seriously the possibility that a few human beings can for brief moments think the thought of Thinking thinking Itself and thus in fact be one with this Divine Mind or God. And as astonishing as such an idea may sound, it is not at all easy to understand what knowing means without supposing some sameness between the truth and our souls. The consequences of this sameness, however, seem to

lead to our being at least potentially no different from God. If this is so, it does away with the notion of otherness, and the related ideas of wonder, surprise, and gratitude. As Aristotle himself points out, Philosophy may be born in wonder, but those things that appeared wonderful, once they are understood, are no longer wondered at; so, he says, when we have once understood the proof of the incommensurability of the diagonal (with the side of the square) we find it so little wonderful that the wonder would be if it were commensurable. But this is to say that the only things that might have a permanent claim on our wonder are the things that are not possible at all. So knowing becomes a progressive destruction of wonder. Many things may *seem* at first mysterious or surprising—nothing may be allowed truly to *be* so.

I suspect I am not being entirely fair to Aristotle and I will be glad to talk about that with you afterwards, but let me now continue trying to sketch the question I see. If, in Aristotle's language, as the hand is the tool of tools, so the soul is the form of forms, then it follows, that there can be no real gifts to the learner, for as Kierkegaard puts it there is nothing which is not already his. It is mere coincidence when and how something is learned, since the underlying sameness of the knower and the known means that the learner somehow always knew it. How else, indeed, could he have recognized it when he saw it, on the occasion we call learning? Let me suppose that this is not a mistaken but only an incomplete account of knowing. What is missing? I have tried to say that gifts, wonder, surprise, and gratitude do not seem adequately accounted for by an understanding that makes them into illusions or superficialities. But what is the alternative? If I am to receive a gift in the full sense of the word it

Carl Stickney is a tutor of St. John's College in Santa Fe. This is the text of a lecture given at St. John's College, Santa Fe, shortly after Bill O'Grady's death in January 1986.

must be something truly different from me, something I could not by my own efforts ever have achieved for myself. How then will I know what to do with it, or how will I be able to receive it? How am I different from a dog, say, who is given a violin? If I then say it must be a twofold gift and that I must be given the ability to receive the gift along with the gift itself, I seem only to have pushed the question back one step. For if I am to be able in turn to receive *that* ability, I must already be capable of such ability, at least potentially, and then it follows that I already have the gift itself potentially. In other words, if it is possible to give the dog the ability to accept the violin, then the dog is potentially human; but the potentially human needs no gift, in the extreme sense here proposed, to become actually human, and an actual human is only receiving his own when he receives a violin. The alternative, then, in order to explain the possibility of this perhaps over-strict interpretation of gifts, requires a mystery. The mystery is that it should be possible to be remade in a radical sense, so as to become capable of receiving a gift which is genuinely other from oneself. In the example, the mystery would be that a dog who was in no sense potentially human, should nevertheless be made human in order to receive a violin. Could there be gratitude in such a case? We might say: Not unless the dog could somehow have desired such a remaking. But that seems to require a knowledge or belief in the dog that such a possibility could exist; and how can a creature be aware of something that in no way belongs to its potentialities? Apparently another twofold gift is required: a message about possibilities and the ability to understand or trust in the message. This seems again to require previous gifts in order that a desire to hear such a message precede the grateful acceptance of the message, and we seem to have fallen into an infinite regress. But perhaps it was hasty to say there could be no gratitude without previous desire. We sometimes say we are grateful to be alive, yet we do not suppose that before we were alive we could have had any kind of desire at all, not even the desire to be alive. Still, we say we are grateful. Of course it may also be that we don't know what we're talking about when we say such things, but in that case gifts and gratitude return to superficialities.

Thomas Aquinas provides us with a better example than the transformation of a dog. He argues that the blessed are given additional light in order to see the essence of God. That is, God must create another kind of light, which in turn is described as giving a new form to the soul and making it resemble God more, so that it may receive the vision of God Himself.

Perhaps a better example still has to do with friendship and love. Can we love without being loved? I don't mean can we desire to possess without being ourselves desired,

but can we affirm another being without a simultaneous awareness of something that affirms our own being? What does it mean to say "I rejoice in your being as you are" if the 'I' that rejoices has not been able to let go of its expectation that all things should be reducible to versions of the way *it* is? But when it does let go of that expectation it faces the possibility that although the other is real enough, its own apparent difference from that other may be the illusion which must be destroyed. I cannot rejoice that you are you if that means that I must become just like you, for then whatever makes me see you as different and thus enables me to rejoice, is just what must be destroyed in me. I must then be able to refrain from reducing what is other to what is same, or to refrain both from making you into me and me into you, if a love that is more than mutual consumption is to exist between us. But where do I get the confidence that there is room for our differences to exist together?

Only from love, only from some knowledge of being loved by someone. Dante's Hell is full of people who did not succeed in imagining the possibility of such love, and they are arranged within the descending order of the cone according to what kind of substitutes for love they chose. This at any rate is what I hope to show.

The difficulties of reading the *Comedy* are many and of many kinds, but among the greatest are those which mirror the difficulties of Dante the Pilgrim in his journey. The first is his fear at the prospect that he must encounter Hell at this very moment. Why not leave it an open question whether there is such a place and what it is like? Why not leave such investigations to the Heroes and Saints, and be content to find out later, indefinitely later. . . after death, in fact, if find out one must? "Besides," he says, "I am not someone capable of coming to conclusions about it, or of doing great things afterward. In short the trip would be wasted on me," and so too speaks many a reader.

Dante's unwillingness to face his journey is not an unfamiliar response. When God speaks to Moses from the burning bush, Moses replies, "Who am I, that I should go unto Paraoh and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?" and again after God has named himself to Moses and told him what kind of journey lies ahead, "But behold, they will not believe me nor hearken unto my voice, for they will say 'The Lord hath not appeared unto thee.'" Dante's words are "Neither I nor anyone else believes I am worthy of this." Confronted with the possibility of a profound transformation of himself, a change whose results will make him a being who can look God in the face, Dante, like Moses, wavers. Both begin with a question: Dante asks Virgil to see if his strength is adequate to such a task, while Moses more straightforwardly asks "Who am I. . . ?" Each reveals the

difficulty of understanding such a change; partly each wants an assurance that he already has all he needs, already *is* the one who can do what must be done. Partly each is already convinced he is not now and never can be such a one. They do not receive the sort of answers they hope for. Moses, the exiled murderer who has abandoned his own kin in their slavery as well as his adopted people in their tyranny, has good reason to wonder who he is and good reason to suppose that nobody will believe the Lord has appeared to such a one as he is. It is as though he foresees he will soon hardly believe it himself. God replies "Surely I will be with thee..." and Moses seems not to hear the words that follow but asks in effect, "But, who are *you*?" Here too he cautiously and politely lets the hypothetical doubting children of Israel stand for his own doubts: "When... they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them?" He wants a way to be sure God is with him, a name to call to make God come to him. God's answer is reminiscent of Odysseus's reply to Polyphemus in its refusal to provide a handle on the one named, for Moses can no more summon God by calling "I am that I am" than Polyphemus could call down punishment upon Odysseus by crying "No-man has done this to me!" But God's answer is richer than that of Odysseus. Rather than making Himself impossible to call upon by declaring, like Noman, that He has no being, God reveals such fullness and activity of His being that there could be no question of needing to call Him, for how could He ever be absent? The name refers to no limits in space or time, so that the first word of the earlier reply "*Surely I will be with thee...*" suddenly takes on much more resonance. The name's possible future meanings, "I will be who I will be" or "I will be gracious unto whom I will be gracious," remind Moses of the rest of that reply: "Surely I will be with thee; and this shall be a token unto thee, that I have sent thee: when thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain." The token that God *has* appeared to Moses is something that hasn't happened yet. It is something that will only happen if Moses is willing to let his need for assurances wait and to allow his transformation to begin in an activity that falls outside the world of masters and slaves: trusting. Of course no one, slave or master, attains freedom in the course of one conversation, even if the conversation is with God, and Moses must ultimately be provided with three signs, all three transformations themselves, and with his brother Aaron as his spokesman before he will undertake his journey. Yet a change has begun that will lead him back to the mountain.

Even when provided with Virgil, his brother-poet, and with a similar promise about a mountain, Dante hesitates. After an eloquent, learned, and pious speech about Ae-

neas and Paul, the Roman Empire and the Church, he concludes with the remark about his own unworthiness quoted earlier. Virgil's answer is as unexpected as God's to Moses and among other things provides the first smile of this Comedy. "If I have rightly understood your speech," he says, "you're suffering an attack of cowardice." But Virgil knows he cannot rely on any simple desire in Dante to throw off all cowardice or to return to the delightful mountain. Neither Dante's love of himself nor his love of God is straightforward and free enough yet for that. So Virgil appeals to what was once Dante's strongest desire: to be loved by Beatrice. That she has chosen Virgil to help, with his beautiful words, and that she has gone into Hell for his sake, these are what act like the sun on the closed-up, drooping flower of Dante's soul. It is the assurance of being loved that allows Dante to begin a journey whose goal is to transform him into a true and active lover. So too it seems that the children of Israel must begin their journey out of Egypt to freedom with the assurance that they have a more powerful master who will treat them better than Pharaoh has. Dante's journey does not diminish the importance of being loved or reveal Beatrice's love as an illusion, but it profoundly changes the meaning of those things; and Israel's journey does not make it untrue that they belong to one more powerful than Pharaoh, but the meaning of their belonging and of his power is transformed. How can a slave look freedom in the face all at once? But even to begin, he must feel something like love.

If the reader joins Dante on his journey, then perhaps this is out of a reflection of the dawning hope that love may free us from fear. For we are all sometimes in doubt about what those things are that truly have power to hurt us and we wonder whether we really see most clearly when we are most afraid. There is a story in the Book of John which illustrates the way the world can look to the eyes of fear. A crowd of people is gathered around a pool called Bethesda. The people are sick, blind, lame, wasting away. Every so often an angel enters the water and the people see motion; this is what they are waiting for, because the first one to enter the water after that motion will be cured. Jesus meets a man who has been waiting a long time, but because of the very weakness he hopes to cure he can never be the first one into the water. Somebody always beats him to it, and nobody is willing to lose his own chance just to help someone else. Everyone is so desperate to escape his own sufferings and so sure that it is all a matter of being first to grab from the limited supply of luck, that they have turned the possibility of health into one more source of suffering.

That pain and weakness should make us compete ruthlessly with each other for the most important things, and that we may be doomed to useless suffering by mere bad

luck are dark and frightening thoughts. I presume they are among those which constitute the dark wood where the poem begins. I don't think we know at the start just what it means that the right way had been lost, but in the course of the poem we learn two things that may help us guess.

The first is that the woman Dante had been in love with, and who had seemed to him the most beautiful in the world, has died. It takes some considerable imagination to try to understand the lost feeling that might produce. It may help to hear Augustine's words about the death of a friend: "At the grief of this my heart was completely darkened, and whatever I cast mine eyes upon looked like death unto me. Mine own country was a very prison to me and my father's house a marvel of unhappiness; and whatsoever I had shared with (my friend) turned to excruciating torture without him. Mine eyes sought him out everywhere and he was not given to me; and I hated all places because they did not hold him, nor could they now tell me, as when he lived, 'Behold, though absent now, he will come shortly.' I became a great riddle to myself. . . ."

The second thing we learn is that Dante is disgusted at what has happened to his city and his church. They seem to have fallen irrecoverably into the hands of the vile and the ignorant. How do these two losses constitute Dante's own lostness?

I suppose that for the most part we are not each our own light, but that we illuminate our lives and our paths by reference to particular experiences that have come to be paradigms for us. Like small suns, they allow us to distinguish one thing from another, foreground from background, straight road from savage forest. Most of us share the early experience of parental love and care, and from this may remain a kind of clarity we have in common about the simplest obligations of kindness and mercy, even if such illumination be reduced to the dimmest of glows. Another common light might issue from our experiences of the larger home of a political community, as a stable sustaining order within which certain kinds of diversity first become possible at all. Our friends, too, shed light on things for us—especially on the question of who we think we are. We wish to please our friends, to be worthy of their desire to please us, and so we try to see with their eyes. The way that *they* see something becomes for us an illumination of a way that thing *is*. That the world can contain such friends is likewise illuminating; it may seem to encourage a certain expectation about the character of the world itself, as, that it will be altogether understandable, or that the things most important to us will turn out to be the most important in every sense. It may be very hard to say how certain experiences *become* the paradigms in the light of which we

will see the world and ourselves, but it is not hard to see that no such paradigm is inviolable. We may forget or cease to pay attention to former experiences; we may make the unwelcome discovery of deep faults in our parents, our community, or our friends. Most of Dante's paradigms are in ruins at the start of the poem.

Yet even when we believe that the world is not a place that can hold what is most beautiful or well-ordered but that all such things are the soonest destroyed, we are not deprived of all illumination. Dante, at any rate, can see still the sun, and in its light a delightful mountain as well as three threatening beasts. They will not leave him and he cannot get around them. They seem to belong to him in some way, as if they are his own particular weaknesses and fears. The third of these beasts, the she-wolf, is so frightening that he loses all hope of climbing the mountain and is driven back "to where the sun is silent." He tells us she has made him like someone who had once been glad to win but now that he must lose, "afflicts himself and weeps in all his thoughts." This is a three-line portrait of despair.

It is already harsh enough when we say dismissively of someone else, "He is a real loser." We mean, "forget about him; he can do nothing right; it is not even worth wondering whether he wants to; he might as well not exist." This is probably what Jesus means when he says that there is a way of calling your brother a fool which puts you in danger of the fire of Hell. But when someone says it of himself, when he not only blames himself for his misfortunes, but sees himself as the greatest misfortune of all, then he is practically in Hell at that moment. There is something terrifying in the solitary pride which responds to the pain of loss by silently turning its teeth on itself, whose every thought is a weeping and a self-affliction. The eerie silence of the whole first part of the first canto is heightened in the line about the place where the sun is silent, for none of the three beasts has yet made a sound, nor has Dante, and now he is driven into a darkness in which the sun itself cannot speak.

What does the sun say when it does speak? Perhaps it says that things are different: there *are* mountains and valleys, straight paths and trackless wastes, and all the different things between. It is only during the cloudiest nights or in the darkest woods that all is one. As long as there is light we have the possibility of choosing between one way and another; we are in utter darkness when we suppose we have no choice, or that it makes no difference what we choose.

Still things are not altogether dark even now for Dante, for at this moment he sees the dim shade of Virgil, "There was offered to my eyes one who seemed faint from long silence." Why Virgil should be described this way seems clear. He has not for some time been among Dante's

sources of light. Whatever he once had to teach has been learned already and perhaps almost forgotten. At this moment though, he is Dante's last chance.

Virgil tells him that the only way leading past those beasts goes through Hell, and reports Beatrice's words that only that which has power to harm us deserves to be feared. Dante has yet to learn how Hell has no power to hurt him, but for now the name of Beatrice is enough.

Let me return to the question of otherness for a moment, before we join Dante on his journey. I think a certain experience of books may help explain what I want to say. One may learn after a time neither to be offended by nor merely to gloss over those passages in a seminar reading which seem most repugnant to one's own understanding, but rather especially to note them as the places where the book most clearly has something to teach. Often enough we may only let it teach the distinguishing peculiarities of its own position, without allowing it really to change anyone's mind about anything, but sometimes the very thorniest places in a text reveal themselves as rose gardens and the steepest, rockiest spots yield undreamt-of views in all directions. One reason this can happen is that there is an orthodoxy, a party-line we share at St. John's, according to which it is expected to happen. This means we do not stop trying because it has not happened on a particular night or by a particular time. The expected result occurs often enough to keep us going. We have confidence that the Author has already thought of most of our own first objections to any of his remarks and so we look past those first reactions for what we assume will be at least adequate replies, and we try to suppose that they will be better than just adequate. All of this allows us to change, if not so far as to simply adopt a completely new viewpoint on the spot, yet far enough to know that we have become importantly different by encountering the real strength of a position which nevertheless is not now and may never become fully our own. We do not always insist that either the book is wrong or we are wrong, although on the other hand most of us recognize the dangers of that slothful avoidance of difficulties which reduces all difference to an excuse for taking no stand at all.

Speaking about her own work (in *Mystery and Manners*, p. 111), Flannery O'Connor said something which may apply to all stories worth remembering:

I often ask myself what makes a story work, and what makes it hold up as a story, and I have decided that it is probably some action, some gesture of a character that is unlike any other in the story, one which indicates where the real heart of the story lies. This would have to be an action or a gesture which was both totally right and totally unexpected; it would have to be one that was both in character and beyond character; it would have to suggest both the world and eternity. . . . It would be a gesture that transcended any neat allegory that

might have been intended or any pat moral categories a reader could make. It would be a gesture which somehow made contact with mystery.

Perhaps it is not only what makes a story hold up as a story, this contact with mystery, but what makes a life hold up as a life. To encounter and affirm what is other, to allow oneself to be changed, that is the mystery.

But I must try again to speak of the right way to affirm what is other. If I can say more than "I am glad to see things have turned out just as I would have planned them," if I can see that sometimes things turn out far better than I could ever possibly have planned them, then I may be able to believe that things are always *in* that one process of a plan better far than anything a human can devise. This would put me in a position to affirm even what is most painful and what seems useless or worse. I would not affirm it in the expectation that I could always eventually demand to be shown clearly what had been good about it and that I had a right to satisfaction on that score; as if the fact of having powers of judgement and understanding automatically made me nothing but an implacable judge, eternally measuring everything against his own fixed standard and perhaps eternally finding it all wanting; but neither would I despair of the chance that the things which hurt worst might be part of a re-making of my own self which would allow me to see and to love in genuinely new ways. It must be that the painful things of the world are the real gifts, as the repugnant passages in the books are the most noteworthy, that is, if there are real gifts at all; and it must be that we all believe we are blessed with such gifts whenever we succeed in loving anyone, even briefly, who is irreducibly different from us.

It is the second book of the *Comedy* that deals explicitly with the painful gifts which are given for our transformation. In the tenth canto, at the beginning of Purgatory proper, there is a description of three sculpted reliefs on the wall of the terrace where Pride is purged. Each depicts a transformation: the first of Mary at the Annunciation, the second, of David dancing before the Ark of the Covenant, and the third, of the emperor Trajan humbling himself to a poor widow. But transformation is not only the content of these reliefs, it is even more strikingly present in their form. They are, says Dante, images which surpass both Art and Nature. They seem to live, speak, sing, and dance, even to embody the temporal sequence of a conversation. There is a suggestion of how to understand transformation here. The images are not transformed into the very people of whom they are images, but they have become more nearly perfect images in a way that was not naturally contained among the potentialities either of marble or of the art of sculpture. What it is to be a sculpture has not been destroyed, but trans-

figured in a way that is "both in character and beyond character." So too may it be for human beings, made in the image of God, if they can humble themselves to accept burdens as gifts.

But to begin to read Dante is to begin with Hell. Where is the hope of transformation, love, or affirmation of the other here? First we might wonder why there is a Hell at all. Why should not all human souls, if there are such things, be gathered into God at the end of earthly life? Wouldn't that be the act of truly loving God? Perhaps it would, but then we must ask whom He is loving, and whether His love can rightly compel that He be loved in return. Let us suppose He loves all to whom He gives Life, and that the gift of Life and Being is a sign of this love. If it is a gift with no strings attached, then it must be possible to do what one likes with it. What if one chooses to lead a life directed to oneself alone, and thus directed away from God? God must not have made such a choice impossible, unless he was only pretending to give a gift in the first place. If he made it possible, though, he must have made a place, or something like a place where one could be away from Him, where one could be as far away as one chose, given the limiting condition that to be an infinite distance from God, who is the source of all Being, would be the same as to cease being altogether. But to withdraw all being from those who wished only to be by themselves would be to attach strings to the original gift again, so that the bottom of Hell must not be infinitely but only indefinitely far from God. On this showing there is nothing outrageous in Dante's claim, expressed in the famous inscription above the Gate, that Primal Love made Hell. Had God's love *required* a positive response, He would only have been loving Himself in the end. By making Hell, God affirms the otherness of the souls he has made, even and precisely when they themselves are unwilling to affirm anything but what is the same as themselves.

What about that claim? How do we know that in fact the damned have done anything worse than embracing the pleasures and possibilities of Life? Surely the great Pagan Philosophers and Poets, among whom is Virgil himself, are not justly placed in Hell?

Surely Odysseus, that lover of wisdom and seeker after new experiences, is not to be condemned as essentially selfish? Surely all the famous lovers who have given up everything else for the sake of their passion, and who define for us the very meaning of losing oneself in another, are not to be seen as unwilling to affirm what is other? We must join Dante on his journey and see. Let us begin near the bottom of Hell with Odysseus, or as Dante calls him, Ulysses. Presumably the extreme condition of those in the lower circles will make their characters easier to recognize.

Dante and Virgil are in the eighth of the nine circles of Hell, the circle of fraud. They come to the eighth chasm within that circle, the chasm of the false counsellors, the location of Ulysses. Dante prefaces the tale with a fairly explicit comparison of himself to Ulysses, the great traveller and teller of tales. "I sorrowed then and sorrow now again when I direct my memory to what I saw; and curb my genius more than I am wont, lest it run where Virtue guides it not; so that if kindly star or something better have graced me the good, I may not grudge myself that gift" or, more literally and strikingly, "...so that I may not envy my own self."

It is universally conjectured that Dante did not know the works of Homer, except through the Latin authors' retellings, so that it would be vain to look for a place in Homer where Odysseus begins one of his tales "I sorrowed then and sorrow now again when I direct my memory to what I saw;" yet how true to the spirit of much of the *Odyssey* they ring! Indeed they are mostly sorrowful tales the Homeric Odysseus brings home. He, too, has been in Hell. Of course, as we learn in a moment, Dante has a new version of Odysseus's last voyage to tell, in which the hero never does go home at all. This non-returning Ulysses seems to represent to Dante a dangerous possibility of uncurbed powers. Like Ulysses, he has been granted an epic voyage, but he explains *his* strange trip at one point in Purgatory with the words, "To return here once again where I am do I make this journey." One might grudge oneself a gift if one saw it had been wasted. The chance to go far from home and to experience remarkable things is a good, but if treated as an end in itself may lead to self-contempt. Here, as in many other places, Dante reflects the condition of those around him; he says that he had raised himself so high to see that he could have fallen into the chasm without a push, had he not grasped a rock. One may go far and raise oneself high in pursuit of adventure and experience, but without something solid to hold onto such heights become chasms.

What does Dante see from his promontory? Passing by in the endless circular motion characteristic of every level of Hell are the souls of the false counsellors, each swathed in flame. All he sees are the flames themselves, but he tells us that each one steals a sinner away and none shows the theft. Virgil adds that each spirit swathes itself with that by which it is on fire. Now the previous Canto described a visit to the chasm of thieves plain and simple, who physically steal things away when the owners are not watching. This chasm, one step worse, contains those who steal with their words that which words are best suited to steal, namely, as Plato might say, the soul's convictions about what is noble and base, right and wrong, or as Dante perhaps suggests, the soul itself. The false

counsellors are not immune to the deceit they practice; they have all ended by deceiving themselves and so they appear as an embodiment of hidden theft. The false illumination provided by their words in their lifetimes derived from a fire that has consumed their own souls. The most convincing and successful liars are the ones who learn to divide their souls so that they may believe their own lies and still profit from others' belief. But such dividing breaks down and burns away the soul of the deceiver as surely as it defrauds his hearers. All of this becomes clearer by the example of Ulysses. But what *is* he doing here? Surely it is not just his reputation for lying tales? After all, every poet, including Dante, *must* lie one way or another. Virgil points out the two-tongued flame which holds Ulysses and Diomedes and explains that they suffer together for stealing away the young Achilles from his wife with their representations of the glory of the coming Trojan war, for stealing the statue of Athena from Troy, and for the taking of Troy by the trick of the horse. Dante is enormously eager to speak with them and beseeches Virgil to wait, as though it is clear to him that Virgil has not said enough, or as though he suspects he has more to learn from Ulysses. Virgil tells him this is a praise-worthy request but stipulates that he, Virgil, will do the talking, and proceeds to ask Ulysses to tell "where he, having lost himself, went to die." Here begins Ulysses's own showing of why he is in this part of Hell.

When I departed from Circe, who beyond a year detained me there near Gaeta, before Aeneas thus had named it,

Neither fondness for my son, nor reverence for my aged father, nor the love I owed which should have gladdened Penelope,

Could conquer in me the ardour that I had to gain experience of the world and of human vice and worth;

I put forth on the deep open sea with but one ship and with that small company which had not deserted me.

Both the shores I saw as far as Spain, far as Morocco; and saw Sardinia and the other isles which that sea bathes round.

I and my companions were old and slow when we came to that narrow pass where Hercules assigned his landmarks,

To hinder man from venturing farther; on the right hand I left Seville; on the other had already left Ceuta.

"O brothers," I said "who through a hundred thousand dangers have reached the West, deny not to this so brief vigil of your senses that remains, the experience, behind the sun, of the world without people.

Consider your origin: ye were not formed to live like brutes, but to follow virtue and knowledge."

With this little speech I made my companions so eager for the voyage, that I could hardly then have held them back, and turning our stern towards morning we made our oars wings for the mad flight, always gaining on the left.

Night already saw the other pole, with all its stars; and ours so low, that it rose not from the ocean floor.

Five times the light beneath the moon had been quenched, and rekindled as oft, since we had entered on the arduous passage,

When there appeared to us a mountain, dim with distance; and it seemed to me the highest I had ever seen.

We joyed and soon our joy was turned to grief: for a tempest rose from the new land and struck the forepart of our ship.

Three times it made her whirl round with all the waters; at the fourth to lift the stern aloft and plunge the prow below, as pleased Another, until the sea was closed above us.

The flame falls silent and Virgil dismisses it. Have we heard enough? We have heard Ulysses counselling his shipmates and we must decide if his counsel was false. No one will deny that his story is as impressive as any page of Greek Tragedy, but perhaps there is something false precisely about tragedy. First to disturb us is the solitude of Ulysses, all the stranger because he shares his flame with Diomedes. Yet he begins his story with the confession that no bonds of love to his family had finally made any difference to him, and he allows us to suppose that much the greater number of his companions had deserted him. Or had he in fact deserted them, as he did his own family? His goal, after all, is ultimately "the world without people." Whether Dante had read Homer or not, he understands the aloneness of the tragic hero, who requires only some minimum of companionship in order that his honor still have meaning. Ulysses bound to Diomedes but somehow looking at no one, thinking of nothing save his own story, is a faithful echo of a scene two thousand years earlier in Homer.

As Achilles in Book XVI of the *Iliad* gives Patroklos permission to borrow his armor to help the Greeks, thus setting the final unfolding of his own tragedy in motion, he warns him not to go too far in killing Trojans, partly because he would thus deny Achilles himself due honor; then he says these terrifying words: "Ah, Father Zeus, Athena, and Apollo! If only not one of all the Trojans might be left, nor even one of the Argives escape death, but we two alone, so that alone we might tear down the crowning battlements of Troy!" This is the "world without people" indeed. He needs only the mirror of one friend in which to see his own glory reflected, but it is his glory to stand utterly apart, needing no one and nothing else. Surely it will be these words that come back to haunt Achilles when Patroklos dies, for they nearly admit that Patroklos himself is only an instrument for the furtherance of Achilles' own glory. It is not hard to see that Achilles has voiced a wish that everything which is not himself should perish, and that Patroklos survives in the fantasy only insofar as he belongs to Achilles.

Does not Dante's Ulysses display the same tendency to sheer self-absorption? His fraudulence runs deep, for he himself believes that he is focussed on what is other, what lies beyond the limits of the known, and indeed he seems to be rewarded with a glimpse of Mount Purgatory, a sight never before seen by man. But he reveals

in his own words that after all it was a "flight," that is, away from something, and that he was lying to propose to his crew that one follows virtue and knowledge by going to the world without people. In this Ulysses who flies from what is other, namely the obligation to love, and transforms his crew into his mirror so that he may witness himself in the land where there are no others, Dante has united Ulysses the teller of tales with Ulysses the plunderer of cities. The world and all possible experiences are to be plundered and consumed in order to make a tale whose justification is only that it is all about me, Ulysses. This is why he represents such a great temptation to Dante. He has succumbed to what could be called "Art for Art's sake" and transformed everything into mere grist for his poetic mill. Nothing will be allowed to be so different that he may not encounter it and give it its place in the story of *his* life. Like the thieves in the neighboring chasm he is neither one nor two, for on the one hand he believes only in himself, single and solitary, and is constantly proving his freedom from all else by abandoning, sampling and going beyond, plundering and assigning place to everything there is, and on the other hand he requires an audience of some kind to be with him, in whose eyes he can see that he alone is. We now see Virgil's wisdom in asking to hear the *last* adventure. Any other tale would only have left us with the triumphant Ulysses, having survived incredible dangers, still outward bound. The only moment of real bitterness for Ulysses, even in his last tale, is when he must say the words "And the prow went down as pleased *Another*." Finally he must submit to make sense of his experience by grudging reference to another, he who thought to go behind the sun itself, as if his own light were sufficient unto all things.

Is Ulysses typical of all who are in Hell? I do not want to take the time to give a detailed answer now, but perhaps a brief beginning will serve. Hell is shaped like a cone sloping to its point at the bottom. All the damned are within the cone and adjacent to one another in descending order of the gravity of their sins. As students of Apollonius know, any cone contains infinitely many possible cones with parallel bases and of varying sizes, each an image of the rest. So too the adjacent lower sin often proves to show something about its predecessor; for example, after Dante has requested the story of Paolo's and Francesca's first kiss and swooned away at its conclusion, as if it had been too much for him, he awakens in the circle of the gluttons, who have all indeed had too much and whose attitude toward the world is more clearly recognizable as that of consumers and

leavers of waste than is the attitude of the great lovers, which nevertheless verges on it. So, too, the whole cone verges to that one point at its bottom, and as students of Pascal know, when one takes ever smaller cones and approaches that base circle which is indefinitely close to the point of the vertex, one may perhaps speak of the circle becoming a point. All levels of Hell share the self-reference of circular motion, but as one approaches the bottom, the circles are smaller and smaller; there is ever less motion or apparent difference from one moment to the next, and at the very bottom there is no motion at all; souls are frozen in ice; the last one of these described is in itself a kind of circle "like a bow bent face to feet." This is the level of the traitors, and it is plain that they represent Ulysses' tendency to abandon and stand apart taken to the *n*th degree. They are in one sense the very freest of all the souls, for what could be freer than to violate all expectations and turn away from everything in an act of treachery? One declares oneself bound by no common standard, defined by no one else's image of who one is, and finally not even by one's own previous notions. One becomes "Noman." The perfectly treacherous act is thus, in its very spontaneity and freedom, self-consuming, and it is fitting that the three souls being endlessly broken in the mouths of Satan are all suicides. It reveals that there can in fact be nothing perfectly evil, for the perfectly evil would destroy itself. So too, Satan himself, this point at the center of the universe, is shown at last to be strangely unimpressive, and even laughable, as Virgil unceremoniously uses him for a ladder. Dante's last view of Hell is of Satan upside down, his legs splayed like someone who has been hurled head-first into a snowbank and whom no one has thought fit to extricate just yet.

The most important things remain to be said. They are in the form of contrapositives to the scenes from Hell. I will say a few of them: If the perfectly evil destroys itself then the perfectly good maintains itself eternally and effortlessly in being. If Satan is the ultimate example of self-centeredness and isolation from all otherness, then the God who makes himself human and suffers death must be the ultimate example of the affirmation of what is other. The sphere is the shape of Paradise for Dante, and the sphere seems a fitting opposite to the point.

I began by speaking of bread; let me end with one more contrapositive: if to affirm what is other requires the mystery that we should be remade, might there not be a bread which, instead of being reduced to a part of us when we eat it, can instead make us a part of it?

Chasing the Goat from the Sky

Michael Littleton

An Approach to Dante's Comedy

To approach Dante's *Divine Comedy* humanly would be to draw near enough to its central fire to feel warmed and brightened by it—to sense with affection something of the heartbeat of its comedy and the scandal of its particularity. This is something one can do by oneself, perhaps; but it would be better, if possible, to do it with friends who can help by looks, gestures, questions, flashes of wit and courtesy—by gentle acts of almost angelic insight or grace. It takes a prodigal intelligence, a surplus of imagination, and more than a touch of pride to grasp the possibilities for comedy in exile, separation, and other such dull privations, to discover something good precisely in the dark woods of a mid-life crisis or in any of the “grey Novembers of the soul.”

There is something natural about getting lost—something as natural as drift or as falling leaves, as easy to do in a crowd as outside one. Man, the thinking animal, is that creature who can lose his way; who can come to see that he has lost it; and who, with the assistance of another, can begin to find his way back to the right path.

It is not entirely clear how the trouble begins. Life can be beautiful, each moment in its time, yet no two moments are alike. When do we first begin to feel the sadness of our autumn? When do we begin our grieving?

Ah! as the heart grows older
It will come to such sights colder
By and by, nor spare a sigh
Though worlds of wanwood leafmeal lie;
And yet you will weep and know why.

Michael Littleton is a tutor at St. John's College, Annapolis. This is the text of a lecture given at St. John's College in Annapolis in 1981.

Even as we reach out to grasp the eternal, we are drawn by stages into the winter of the soul. Instead of an altar of earth we fashion for ourselves a golden calf—trusting in, yet fearing the loss of, animal vitality. While barely taking the risk of separateness, we are plunged with Adam into the secret things—without knowing the bottom, without knowing the architect's design. Place and time seem to conspire against us; and we fall tragically, understandably, in love and in hate with God's world, as victims more of our own desire than of the blindness of fate.

What scope is there for comedy, given the weight of these matters, the gravity of these concerns? There is good precedent for the attempt to celebrate human loss in ways which either complement or transcend the tragic ones. The *Odyssey*, for example, wins and warms us as much by its truth as by its strangeness. Sometimes, after great hardship in life, what has been lost is found, passing every test that mind and heart can devise to tell against the identity of the new with the old. Isaiah's discovery of the identity of Jerusalem even in the darkness of Babylonian captivity holds true, even where Israel had suffered double for her misuse of David's project and dream. In St. Luke's Gospel there are three parables clustered together celebrating things that are lost and later found: a lost coin, a lost sheep, and a lost son—the so-called prodigal son.

If loss can be celebrated, even in a small way, it can be comic. Dante himself has some delightfully simple things to say about this. In a letter to Can Grande de la Scala his friend and patron, Dante explains his choice of title:

... Here beginneth the comedy of Dante Alighieri, a Florentine by birth and not by character, to understand which be it known that comedy is derived from "comos" a village and "oda" which is song, whence comedy is, as it were, rustic song. So comedy is a certain kind of poetic narration different from all others. It differs then from tragedy in its content in that tragedy begins admirably and tranquilly whereas its end or exit is foul and terrible and it derives its name from "tragus" which is a goat and "oda" as though to say goat-song, that is, rank like a goat, as it appears from Seneca and his tragedies: whereas comedy introduces some harsh complications but brings its matter to a prosperous end.

He goes on to say that tragedy and comedy differ in their mode of speech. Tragedy is exalted and sublime, whereas comedy is lax and humble:

If we have respect to the content of this work we can see that the title of it is justified since its beginning is horrible and rank for it is Hell and in the end it is prosperous, desirable and gracious for it is Paradise. Whereas if we have respect to the method of speech the method is lax and humble for it is the vernacular speech in which very women communicate.

These comments, helpful as they might ultimately be in understanding Dante's comedy, appear to raise many more questions than they answer. It may be comforting to be promised a happy ending, a goat-free village, so to speak, which will not overly tax our intellects or sublimate our spirits. But the ordinary reader, whether comically inclined or not, is likely to encounter severe difficulties in understanding and sympathizing with Dante's supposed comic intent. There has never been a comedy like this one for making demands on its readers. Definitions will not help much, but it may be worthwhile to make note of goats, villages, and women speaking in the vernacular.

You all know the literal story upon which the *Comedy* is built. The poet Dante, together with Virgil, his beloved guide and author, makes the descent into Hell, down to the very frozen depths where all vitality and life congeal. They manage to go up by going down, emerging on the other side at the foot of Mt. Purgatorio. There to greet them is Cato, the just. Together Dante and Virgil ascend the mountain and pass through the purgatorial fire. At the top of the mountain Dante is reunited with the heavenly lady who was his childhood love, a woman he loved and deeply admired, and whose death had shaken him deeply. Meeting her there, Dante feels again the power of the ancient flame. Then the lady, Beatrice, becomes his guide to Paradise and to the vision of God and of His city. She is aided, near the end of the journey, by St. Bernard.

It is impossible to either dismiss or be completely content with the literal level of Dante's poem. It has its liter-

al power as a vision claiming to represent things as they are in the afterlife as it was understood in the year 1300: Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise. It has meaning on many levels beyond the literal, however, just as does the Bible, which was Dante's model.

One striking fact about Dante's Comedy, which shows his courage as a man, and is one of the essential differences between his approach to his work and that of Virgil and Homer, is that he puts himself in his own poem. It takes some courage to do that, especially given the way he actually appears in his poem. He does not seem to have much concern for his reputation.

Why does Dante so openly write about himself? It may be appropriate to consider his comedy as essentially involved with individuation; and to view individuation as the coming to birth of the genuinely comic impulse in the soul. Dante might be said to celebrate a mid-life crisis and its resolution. That resolution can best be described as a completed journey to the heart of the poem. Dante's hero is neither a founder of a city nor an apostle, but a poet who knows what he wants to do and what he wants to be. He must submit himself to the strangeness of the poem's discipline and its pilgrimage, not just as an observer, not just as a poet, but as a human being in search of a real and lasting place in the affections of his fellow citizens, in that Florence which does not deserve to die. His poem is his prayer to and for this city.

One of the very first glimpses we have of Dante, the pilgrim, in the poem, after our initial introduction in the dark woods, is in his meeting with Virgil. Dante is protesting. He knows that he is summoned to make a journey, but he is not very eager to go. He says, "But I? Why go? Who permits it? I am not Aeneas, I am not Paul. Neither myself nor others deem me worthy of it." The ancient world, in the person of Virgil, replies with a touch of disdain, "If I have rightly understood thy words, thy soul is smit with coward fear." Dante has no rejoinder.

How can the goat-song, the goat of tragedy, be chased from our skies if no one is willing to take the risk of Hell? Canto II of the *Inferno* addresses this problem. Dante is trying to face the difficulty:

The day was departing, and the brown air taking the animals that are on earth from their toils, and I, one alone, was preparing myself to bear the war both of the journey and the pity which memory that errs not shall relate.

Dante is all alone, plummeting downwards. In his words, he has come to himself, but it does not seem to have done much good. As we see him here, he is hell-bent, retreating from his purpose to climb the holy hill of god. When he meets the shade of Virgil in the wilderness, the biblical place of temptation and of dialogue

either with God or with the devil, Dante is all alone with his love. One asks, why should it be Virgil who appears to Dante? The answer seems to be that Dante had no other vital possibility. His love for Virgil is real and powerful. When the shade of Virgil appears to him in the desert, Dante's love and admiration for him enables him to move in a way that unites his natural tendency to gravitate downwards with his will to climb the hill of God. Virgil makes it possible for him to put these two things together. But it is more than his love for Virgil that gets Dante moving. At the end of this conversation, Virgil manages to tell Dante that he has been in touch with a heavenly lady who happens to speak Italian, if that is the way to understand the Italian word "*favella*." He says that her eyes were brighter than the stars. You know how important the stars are for Virgil.

Her eyes shone brighter than the stars.
Her voice was soft and gentle and she
spoke in her dialect . . .

It is an interesting prospect to imagine Beatrice speaking to Virgil in Italian, with tears in her eyes, and the ancient Latin poet hearing the modern dialect and clearly recognizing its Latin roots and what had happened to them with the passing of time.

In the first part of the *Inferno* it is pity (*pieta*) that predominates, even before we have reached Hell's gate. We see Dante, preparing himself to face the journey, and the pity of it; Virgil, telling Dante how moved he was to hear of his plight from the heavenly lady; and Beatrice herself, explaining to Virgil that there is a noble lady above who, moved to pity Dante at his impasse, in turn has moved Santa Lucia, who has appealed to Beatrice and set her lovely eyes weeping. It is not only Dante whom Virgil pities: there is pity written on his face for the anguish of Hell's people, perhaps including himself. Anyone who has read the *Aeneid* knows that for Virgil, as well as for his hero, Aeneas, there are tears in the nature of things. Dante, who undoubtedly wept as did Augustine for Dido in her forsakenness, swoons with pity when he discovers the tragic thread which connects the sorrow of Paolo and Francesca with Dido and gives to their lives something of the same essential meaning.

Soon, however, Dante must learn to feel and express not just pity, but anger, as the evils born of incontinence begin to show themselves in all their ugliness and meanness. Pity without noble anger is like music without gymnastics. There is something flabby and spineless about a confrontation with the dark side of one's human nature if anger is altogether lacking: not the sullen anger which sulks and feeds on itself; not the violent anger of factions or party strife; but the noble anger that sides with

reason and wholeness and cuts through the murk of things and brings them to a proper decision.

Anger is essential, according to Virgil, for entering the city of Dis, the walled city of Hell, where injustice entrenches itself, seizes control of reason, and organizes itself with violence and wrath. We wait with the two poets outside the gates of the city. Many of its grave citizens are Florentine. We are encountering insolence on an angelic scale; and neither Virgil's anger nor Dante's fear seems entirely adequate to the difficulty at hand. The human ability to integrate evil into one's conscious mind and remain intact is severely limited. Only angelic "*thumos*"—the anger from above—is adequate to force the unlocking of Hell's gate.

The city of Dis, with its iron walls, high towers, and grave citizens is in some way Dante's own city. In another way it is not. It seems organized and walled against him. It is violent, proud, and preoccupied with its own fame, like the city of Babel. In it Dante first learns of the dark exile he is to experience in less than fifty months. In it he also hears gentle words of encouragement:

My son, thy fortune reserves such honour for thee
that both parties will have a hunger of thee, but
far from the goat shall be the grass.

Dante is coming to his own, but he is not permitted to stay. The violence of Florence, even in men of great dignity and nobility, is all too reminiscent of that monster of Crete, the Minotaur, unnatural offspring of royal woman and beast. Is this monster the same monster we meet in Book VIII of the *Republic*, which tries to come out in Timocracy, Oligarchy, and Democracy, and eventually manifests itself in the tyrant's greed for power and tragic withdrawal into spiritual isolation? This monster is frozen and despairing, unable even to weep.

Once, says Virgil, the world was chaste. Now there are tears in the nature of things. They all flow downwards from the brokenness of the Old Man of Crete, into the river Phlegethon. Virgil remarks in passing that nowhere in Hell will Dante see a more notable sight than this river, the third of the streams of Hell, which has the power to quench the flames of whatever lies above it.

We are nearing the midpoint of the *Inferno* now. We are reaching the point of Virgil's greatest influence on Dante, and the point where Dante must begin self-consciously to differentiate himself from Virgil and allow his own comedy to begin to breathe and live.

For the first time, now, Dante begins to speak of the *Commedia*. The importance of this is underscored by a new obstacle to the poets' descent. They are impeded at this halfway point by a waterfall. There they can hear the water flowing down to lower Hell. There seems to be no

way to continue the descent unless Dante is willing to make use of the vehicle of his own imagination. He takes off his rope girdle and at Virgil's request throws it into the pit. "Watch out," Virgil tells him. "It is going to be your own thoughts that come back to you like a boomerang." In no time at all a monster appears with a human face and the tail of a reptile or scorpion. Dante must entrust himself to this weightless creature of his own imagining.

Dante's comic imagination in the lower parts of Hell is severely limited by its subject matter, the abysmal depths of evil. At one point, however, in Canto XXI, it is irresistibly funny. One relaxes in spite of oneself. Dorothy Sayers' vital translation clearly catches the spirit of it. It is exceedingly dark in this realm. Dante is intently gazing at black boiling pitch that reminds him of Venetian shipbuilders at work, when suddenly Virgil cries out, "*Guarda, guarda!*" "Look out, look out!" Dante turns around, "longing to see the thing he has to shun," and behold, "a grim black fiend comes over the rock ridge at a run." "Wow! What a grisly look he had on him!" The tempo of all this is presto, like the beginning of the finale of Act 1 of *Don Giovanni*. Our poet, our would-be hero, has to crouch down behind a rock while Virgil deals with the demons there through their leader Malacoda. When the danger seems less, Virgil summons Dante from behind the rock in unforgettable fashion:

Thou, cowering there discreet
hid mousey-mouse among the
splintery, cracked crags of the
bridge, come down. All's safe for it.

There is nothing Virgilian about the names of the demons in this ditch. They are all good (or bad) Italian; they remind one of Santa's reindeer. Listen to them: Alechino, Calcabrina, Cagmazzo, Barbariccia, Libicocco, Draghignazzo, tusked Ciriatto, Graffiacane, Farfarello, and Rubicante il Pazzo. Although this is not exactly high comedy it is surely comic relief. If we surrender ourselves at this point to Dante's art we do not really feel terror. Instead we begin to feel, for the first time, a counter motion to that of the descent.

This counter-motion in the soul is confirmed a few cantos later in the explicit comparison of Virgil to the sun. In Hell the real sun has been left behind. Like Socrates in the *Phaedo*, Dante has taken flight from the directness of its beams, to *logos*—in this case the *logos* of tragic poetry. Dante the pilgrim is now consciously making use of that poetry to help him through Hell and bring him closer to his heart's desire. Virgil is compared to the sun in Aquarius as it is melting the hoar frost, which the peasant has mistakenly taken for snow, at a time when snow

would be a calamity for his flock. Soon afterwards we find Virgil exhorting Dante not to lose heart. At this point in their descent the poets have to climb. We have been going down in order to get up, but now we must go up a little in order to go down. Virgil appeals to fame as a stimulus, which is just and right. It is part of the integrity of the pagan world; and it helps Dante as well as his readers.

However, Dante and his readers have already begun to differentiate themselves from Virgil's perspective. The movement upwards which the appeal to fame suggests carries with it a strong temptation for the Judeo-Christian conscience. We are made to realize this in the canto that dramatizes Dante's meeting with the shade of Ulysses. He recounts for Dante a speech in which he calls upon men to leave aside all brutishness and to be concerned with fame, intelligence and virtue. This speech, together with his sea voyage beyond the pillars of Hercules, represents the strongest motion of ascent in lower Hell. Dante must oppose that motion within himself; he must, as he says, curb his own genius. The appeal to fame is by no means without its dark side, and Ulysses, the old voyager, represents Dante's greatest temptation: to do it all with art.

Let us move now into the world we know and try to see it with new eyes. The *Purgatorio* in its essential meaning is the world we know. Literally it is of course a world we are not yet in a position to know; but it moves us with all the force of a world that we have perhaps left behind. If one relaxes, reading the *Purgatorio*, one gets the sense of sailing into Honolulu early in the morning, on one of those perfect days when it is not too hot and the air is pure. One smells the perfume in the air. According to Dante, Florence belongs to our "widowed northern clime." He must have wanted Purgatory to be south, really south, under Jerusalem, out there somewhere where those fresh, sweet smells and temperatures are, and those stars which have not been seen since Adam and Eve; and yet there they are, shining in the face of Cato.

Here is the first problem: what is Cato doing there? Is he there because he represents justice? That is part of the reason. But perhaps more importantly, Cato is there because he is the man who knows that freedom, true freedom, is not a gift from Caesar. At present we see Cato with his face shining before the four cardinal virtues, which, like the stars, have long been hidden. He seems to claim the rocks at the foot of Mt. Purgatory for himself. He represents for us the longing for true freedom and the beginning of the discipline that points to it.

Our first sense of this discipline in Purgatory has to do with the use of time. Virgil and Dante are moved to stop, to look and to listen. The appeal to the eyes is very strong,

initially, in the *Purgatorio*. The face of Cato, the sunlight and the stars, make it easy to stand and gaze. But Cato makes some immediate sharp separations when Virgil tries to move him with an appeal to his wife Marcia's beautiful eyes. Cato says, "No, you can't appeal to that here. While I was alive that moved me; but you can't appeal to that. But if you want to appeal to a heavenly lady, now that's another matter. You can do that."

Virgil is a little uncomfortable with this. He is not used to it. Then Cato rebukes him and Dante for getting too absorbed in the love poetry of Casella. Virgil does not know at first how to respond to this unfamiliar sense of urgency. He speeds up too much, at first, before finding a more appropriate motion. Then he plucks a tough, flexible reed for Dante, which comes out of the ground freely, unlike the golden bough that Aeneas struggled to remove.

Now there is a scene that recalls both Ulysses' sea voyage and the scene before the walls of the city of Dis, where the angel came across the swamp and frogs jumped out of the way. Across the waters, at the foot of the mountain, comes an angel, piloting a boat without oars. Within the boat are more than a hundred spirits, singing together, "*In Exitu Israel de Egitto*." They are singing the *Tonus Peregrinus*, one of the oldest chants still sung in both the church and the synagogue. The Psalm text refers to Israel's exodus from Egypt, from the land of strange speech. The feeling evoked here is that of the urgency of the exodus. There was no time for secondary matters; everything had to be done in haste.

This feeling of exodus is one of the most important aspects of the *Purgatorio*. We hear that song; and we apply it to ourselves both as individuals and as nations. We are engaged in coming out to freedom just as the Israelites were when they came from Egypt to Mt. Sinai, where the whole people together heard the voice of God. Dante and Virgil are now in unexplored territory. They begin to move with the people of the exodus, although at a different rate and with somewhat special circumstances.

What is happening to comedy and tragedy here? Let us make note of the astronomical situation. The goat is at the zenith—on the meridian—as Dante and Virgil hear the song of Exodus. It is morning in *Purgatorio*, and the goat is Capricorn, where the sun was on the darkest and longest day. Now that day is dawning, the goat, which was visible a few hours earlier, is put to flight. It begins to set. The tragic part of the poem is now behind us. Comedy has been conceived, but it has not yet come out into the open. There is a discipline which precedes its birth: a discipline related to this new feeling for time and its importance.

Pride, envy, and wrath are the truly grave sins here on the journey, because they cast a shadow of fatality over

human endeavor. They make even a proper discussion of the freedom of the will difficult, to say nothing of the implementation of the arts of freedom in the lives of men and women and their nations. It should be clear that there can be no significant earthly lightness, no gentle comedy in the soul of man, without some progress through the realm of love's disorders.

Let us go at once with Dante and Virgil to the needle's eye, the first landmark inside the gates of Purgatory proper. You remember that one: it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. What does this mean for Dante and Virgil? The rich young ruler of the Gospels obeyed all the commandments but nevertheless remained troubled. Perhaps there was in him a touch of the ancient city's concern with fame, which does not admit the idea of risking one's reputation by not being well off. He could be said to be miserly about his reputation. This must be resisted. One cannot simultaneously view oneself as rich, as somebody important, and also be truly open to the discipline that looks to God's future gift of freedom for oneself and for the whole people of the Exodus.

Here, in contrast to the rich young ruler, we see the courage of Dante's risking himself in the poem, and the prodigality of his comic imagination. He at least is willing to risk his reputation. This may be because he does not take freedom for granted, in the sense of simply believing he has it, without a view to where it came from, as a process, as a coming out. If there is no disciplined attempt to come out into freedom, especially to come out from under pride, envy, sloth and wrath, then there is no real freedom. The *Comedy* does not even begin to talk about the freedom of the will until after those things have been at least provisionally addressed. And it is not until these things have been addressed that comedy is really born for the souls that are there in Purgatory.

Then we hear the name of King Midas. There is a wonderful line that says that it is right that we always, forever, laugh at the example of King Midas. It really is funny. Once pride, envy, wrath and sloth are out of the way, here in the circle of the avaricious, the real laughter begins. There is some really powerful political avarice being purged in this circle. But that problem need not detain us forever, need not keep us from laughing, because it has in principle been dealt with. Midas shows us that.

Now comes the meeting with Statius, and the birth of comedy. There are a number of events here to consider quickly: there is an earthquake, there is fear, there are heavenly hosts singing. The Roman poet Statius, a Christian poet, appears on the scene. He does not know that Virgil, who was his inspiration, and whom he has always loved, is present. Five hundred years in Purgatory have not diminished his love for Virgil. Like a coal miner with

a lamp on his back to show others the way, Virgil was the light for Statius. Dante in the meantime is trying to keep quiet; he does not know what to do. He is caught between Virgil and Statius. He knows that there is nothing Statius would like better than to know that Virgil is standing near him. He cannot hide his feelings, and he laughs, not knowing whether it is right or wrong to do so. And it is right.

Statius, who has just now freely stepped into the possibility of Paradise, is responsible for that earthquake. What he does next touches the very heart of comedy. Statius, who has just become free to leave his punishment and go to Paradise, stops, and says, "I love that Virgil so much, I would stay, just one more day." He is willing to put off the vision of God for one more day, in order to spend it with Virgil. Who is speaking here? The sinner? No, this is the purged Statius.

This is the birth of comedy, for Dante. This is the ability to do what Cato could not do, at the bottom of Purgatory: the ability to bind oneself in the downward direction, to love what is below. Statius is free to do that. What was he purging, then, in this circle? Virgil was concerned. For many years the reputation of Statius' love for him had reached him down there with Homer and the virtuous pagans. On the basis of what he had heard, he had conceived for Statius a greater love than he had for any other living soul. Virgil could not bring himself to think that Statius could be purging avarice. Somehow it seemed all wrong; and, indeed, it was all wrong. He was purging not avarice but prodigality—prodigality which, when made right in the discipline of Purgatory, becomes the very generosity that is the soul of comedy.

Statius later goes on to discourse on creation and on what is involved with beginnings. His view is that binding downwards, which we have seen in the gesture of his love for Virgil, is already implicit in the creation of man. Creation is a binding downward from highest heaven to the created soul.

Statius stays with Dante and Virgil now as they move up the mountain. Together they go through some very important transformations. A few cantos back, Dante had to be delivered from the allure of the Sirens' voices; he had to be urged onward, away from them. Now they reach the top of the mountain, and the purgatorial fire. Dante passes through the fire with Virgil on the one side and Statius on the other—and Beatrice ahead. He intends for us to hear the Siren's song here. Through the fire we find that everything is transformed. Nothing is really lost. The Sirens are there in a new, good form. They are calling Dante forth, not to his worst imaginings, such as he had to face in Geryon's flight, but to his best imaginings.

When Dante emerges from the fire he sees a magnificent view. It is evening in Purgatory. He hears words

from the Bible that are deeply moving. What Dante hears is the invitation, in Latin, from the parable of the sheep and the goats: "*Venite benedictis patris mei.*" "Come ye blessed of my Father and inherit the Kingdom." In this parable the sheep and the goats are separated on the basis of their deeds. The marvelous thing in the parable is that the unrighteous say, "When did we not feed you, when did we not clothe you, when did we not take you in?" The answer: "Inasmuch as you did it not to the least of these my brethren you did it not to me." The righteous, the sheep, are equally surprised by the verdict, and ask, "When did we do it?" "When you did it to the least of these you did it to me." We hear the voice of the new Sirens here, the voice of the Shepherd King, the voice of Scripture.

The atmosphere here is intoxicating. Dante does not miss the point of it. He responds to this occasion by celebrating himself as a goat. He settles in for the night. His image is a pastoral one, of wanton goats on the heights, which are now made tame. The shepherds, the pastors, are of course Virgil and Statius. The Christian and the pagan poet are both pastors to him. Keeping in mind the play on the goat song in Dante's letter to Can Grande, we can see the possibility that Dante is now casting himself in the role of the goat, who must be chased if comedy is to replace tragedy. He seems to be willing to accept this role.

A few cantos later Dante meets his beloved lady Beatrice, the inspiration of his life. She in effect shames him for not having lived out the full implications of what she had been to him in his young life in Florence. He has to go through the shame. He has to admit that he gave up too soon on the mystery of her person, chasing things of lesser worth, after her death. She shames him for being, in effect, a goat. Something in him must depart, must be cast off as an exile.

The meaning of the invitation, "Come ye blessed," and the separation that is part of it, is very complex here. Dante, the pilgrim, hears the words of the parable as a promise. Standing symbolically for all men of good will, he accepts the invitation and presses forward to the goal. On the other hand he hears the rejection: good will is not enough. It must become deed. In his wanton joy upon the heights of God's holy mountain Dante knows himself as both sheep and goat. He has to admit to having gone astray. He must take back the slander of the woman who was God's gift to him, and own up to having been a goat in relation to her. Her charge against him is this: that believing her to be a merely temporal delight, he turned away from her, to politics, philosophy, and other women. He exiled her, so to speak; and now he must suffer his own symbolic exile.

Now Dante is ready to enter Paradise. Paradise is ini-

tially the power of Beatrice as fact, as holy and present fact. She dominates everything. It is in her eyes and in her smile. Dante is now free to take his fullest joy in the sight of her. The human face is allowed to shine in its proper glory as a revelation of God.

We start with this reality; here is the real Beatrice, who set Dante's spirit trembling within him. And in this reality, there is free movement; we move in and with the freedom of motion that is inspired by God. Instinct has been restored to its pristine purity, and is now a trustworthy guide. From the outset in Paradise Dante's impulses are right, even when his ideas are all wrong. Intelligence is at play everywhere; wit is dancing warmly, courteously, and lovingly in this festival of light, meaning, and deepest communion.

Tragedy is very far behind. There are only hints of it in the degradation and failure and imperfection implied by the shadow of the earth's cone. And even these are lovingly, vividly transcended in Cunizza's speech, in the heaven of Venus, in which she forgives herself for having been conquered by love. "I joyfully grant myself indulgence," she says. There is joy here that extends to all of God's works; there is a humanizing and freeing of the conscience.

When he enters this heaven, Dante is still in quest of his city. There has been a dark prophecy of his exile since his time in the city of Dis; and it is still on his mind. While he is in Paradise we still do not know what is going to come of this prophecy. But here Dante is looking for his own true Florence—a Florence that he could celebrate fully, and love fully. He is looking for his home.

Here, in the same circle with Cunizza, Dante meets the harlot Rahab, whom we know from the story of Joshua and Jericho. Jericho is one of the oldest walled cities in the world; and Rahab lives in its wall. In contrast to the wall in the city of Dis, with the Furies on top of it, here we have a mediating link. This woman lives somehow in Jericho, but not altogether, because she lives in the wall. She has sheltered the Israelite spies, preserving their lives while the authorities in Jericho are seeking to kill them. It is an unforgettable deed. She thereby saves herself and her family and becomes, in the memory of the Biblical people, a true member of the city for all time. According to tradition, she becomes the great-grandmother of King David; and in the New Testament she is part of the genealogy of Jesus. This is a tremendous image: of a harlot, an outcast, one abused. Here is a picture of exile but also of faithfulness and courage. This is a mediating link for Dante. He says that here Rahab "finds peace." The walls of the old city are coming down.

The new city appears a little later, in Canto XV. This canto is analogous to the moment in the *Aeneid* when Aeneas visits Anchises, his father, in the underworld.

Dante meets his ancestor Cacciaguida here, and discovers "the limits of [his] Paradise, and [his] grace." Here the eyes of Beatrice blaze with their most brilliant smile. Here, in the Mars of the martyrs, Dante discovers his own proper self-respect and his deepest response to the city of Florence as the promised land of his own destiny and choice. It is here that Dante discovers how noble are his own proximate beginnings, and how beautiful Florence was before it abandoned the gentle purity of its manner of life and embraced luxury and faction, bartering away its birthright and its peace.

But we somehow cannot believe that the city of God is here for Dante: a city that unites the older Florence or Cacciaguida with his own Florence. What is missing from this older city? What more could Dante ask, or contribute? The answer comes as an easily overlooked aside. His ancestor addresses him with the formal "you," the old Roman "*voi*." Dante is immersed in the conversation, when Beatrice gives him a little smile of warning. Almost as if in response to Dante's desire, the voice of Cacciaguida has begun to sound more sweetly and gently, "*Con voce piu dolce e soave*." But it is not, as Dante observes, "in this our modern dialect: *Ma non con questa moderna favella*." Cacciaguida is not speaking the language of the village, the language that women speak, the language of comedy. The woman Beatrice smiles at this; and Dante begins to know his own contribution to his city.

Ten cantos later, in a garden-like setting, Dante sees the solution to his problem of ancient and modern. He has gone through his examination in theology by Sts. Peter, James and John, who have been present to him in light and in speech. Dante has just recovered from a temporary blindness when a fourth light appears to him. Beatrice informs him that it is Adam. Dante burns with desire to speak. Adam dramatizes his presence like an animal moving beneath a covering. Then he proceeds to answer Dante's questions before Dante asks them. He addresses Dante as "my son" (*figlio mio*). One of Dante's unspoken questions concerns the idiom or language that Adam had used. What was the holy language? Was it Hebrew?

Adam answers:

The tongue I spoke was all quenched long before the work that never might be completed was undertaken by Nimrod and his folk. For never yet did product of reason maintain itself forever because of human preference which does change in sequence with the heavens . . . The use of mortals is as the leaf upon the branch which goeth and another followeth.

It is all right, says father Adam, you may write the poem in Italian! The language of comedy—and of women—is all right. This begins to return Dante to the ground of his own humanity and temporality.

There remains one last word to say about the goat. In Hell goats were mentioned in two places: first in Canto XV where Brunetto Latini prophesies both Dante's exile from Florence and his escape from the conflicting factions, and also the honor in store for him:

Thy fortune reserves such honor for thee, that both parties will have a hunger of thee. But far from the goat shall be the grass.

In this utterance the goat is a metaphor for the faction-torn city of Florence. The second reference is at the end of Canto XIX where Virgil softly deposits Dante on a ridge high above the simoniacal popes, in a place where even goats would have difficulty.

In Purgatory, at the bottom of the mountain, in Canto II, the goat is in the sky. It is the constellation Capricorn, and it is being driven from the sky by the dawning equinoxial sun. At the top of the mountain Dante becomes the sole goat. He must submit to a symbolic death

of repentance in order to receive the gift of life, as mediated through the eyes of Beatrice, his intelligent, devout, and lovely lady, radiant in her immortal garb.

In Paradise there is only one reference to the goat. It comes in Canto XXVII, immediately following Dante's meeting with Adam. Now it is St. Peter who speaks:

And thou my son, who for thy mortal weight (or burden) shalt return again below. Open thy mouth and do not hide what I hide not. As our atmosphere raineth down in flakes the frozen vapours when the horn of the heavenly Goat is touched by the sun, so did I see the ether adorn itself and rain upward the flakes of the triumphant flashes which had made their stay with us.

This semblance of snow flurries in heaven, occasioned by the misuse of authority on the earth, and the consequent corruption of faith and innocence in all but the smallest and newest of children, helps our poet Dante to take up his mortal burden and begin to call things, in Italian, by their true names.

The Miraculous Moonlight: Flannery O'Connor's *The Artificial Nigger*

Robert S. Bart

Mr. Head awoke too early to get up yet on the morning he was to take his grandson Nelson to Atlanta. The room was flooded with moonlight that silvered the boards of the floor and brought out the pattern in the ticking on his pillow, so that its material seemed brocade. Everything in the room was dignified by the light, even the slop jar on the floor. There was only one dark spot right under the window, where Nelson was asleep on his pallet. But in spite of that, in the moonlight Mr. Head's eyes gained a look of 'ancient wisdom.' He was confident in the 'calm understanding' (pp. 102-103)* he had gained in his 60 years, the 'choice blessing' of age. He contemplated the day before him with ripe satisfaction. The moon was full, but at first only half of it showed in Mr. Head's shaving mirror. It appeared to be awaiting gravely his permission to enter the room the whole way. It was almost as if Mr. Head were not only in command of himself and the day's expedition, but of nature as well. When the whole round moon rolls into sight, Mr. Head goes back to sleep, sure his 'will and strong character' will see that he awakes before his grandson does.

As we become aware of Mr. Head's stature as a human being, his role in the journey he is to take with his grandson is compared to that of Vergil with Dante, and

of the archangel Raphael with Tobias. As many of you are aware, Vergil is summoned by Beatrice, coming down from heaven and urged by many higher beings. Vergil is to help Dante in his despair as he faces the terrible obstacles that confront him when he tries to escape from the dark wood and reach the blessed light. Vergil is the teacher who knows the way, and who knows that that way must lead through all the circles of hell before he and Dante may ascend to the light toward which Dante has tried to proceed directly. As Dante says, Vergil is his 'author,' the man without whom he would not be who he is, and without whose book the *Divine Comedy* would never have been written.

Tobias is less well known to us. He is the son of the blind Tobit, whose story is told in the Bible. (In Protestant texts the Book of Tobit is found apart in the *Apocrypha*.) After many years of war, Tobit thinks it is now possible to reclaim a large deposit he has left in a distant country. But, being blind, he must entrust the mission to his young son Tobias. The archangel Raphael, who has pity on the old man and his son, appears opportunely in the guise of a man who knows the way and undertakes to be Tobias' guide. He pretends to be a kinsman. Tobias and he set out together, as in the several Renaissance paintings of the subject, the Archangel walking along, holding Tobias' hand, the youngster's dog trotting beside them. The Archangel has a complex mission in mind and thanks to his direction not only is the deposit recovered, but a wonderful fish is caught whose gall cures Tobit's blindness on their return. As if this were not enough to make it the happiest of expeditions, Raphael has in mind also the prayers of Sarah, a girl who is the victim of the demon Asrael. Already Asrael has killed

Robert Bart is a tutor and former dean of St. John's College, Santa Fe. This is the text of a lecture originally given on Homecoming weekend in Annapolis in September 1986, and then given in Santa Fe in April 1987. Mr. Bart writes, "This lecture was composed the summer of 1986, while the whole world was brooding and suffering over the injustice in South Africa and the murderous hatred it engenders."

seven bridegrooms of hers one after another as they sought to consummate their marriage on their wedding night. Tobias too wins her for his bride, but following the ritual set forth by Raphael drives the demon away forever. There is a modern prayer addressed to the archangel for travellers when journeying into a far country. But perhaps because no one is ever entirely at home in this world, it is a prayer for everyone to meet with those who will bring them happiness in a province of joy, and in such a way as not to remain in ignorance of the interests of their true country. Such are the guides to whom Mr. Head is compared during his early morning reverie.

Yet even before he falls asleep again we are made aware that some of his intentions in the 'moral mission' (103) he plans are not quite as exalted as those of Vergil and Raphael. Indeed, he wants his grandson to see the city for what it is, to see that it is not such a 'great place' (104) as he supposes, and so to rest content with him home in the country. It is to be an educational experience, one with a moral tone. As he later says to a stranger on the train:

'The thing to do with a boy,' he said sagely, 'is to show him all it is to show. Don't hold nothing back.' (109)

Mr. Head may even be right that there is no good reason to go to the city except to learn to shun it. But as we come to know Nelson's resistance to this idea, we find sympathy for his rebellion. Nelson is ten and around the fact of his coming from Atlanta he is putting up a crucial fight for his independence. His grandfather is determined to compel the lad to conform to his own convictions. Mr. Head is not unlike Vergil, in that he knows in advance what he wants his companion to learn from what he is shown. In his complacency, he supposes, as we have already seen, that he has nothing to learn himself. Now Nelson takes pride above all in the fact that he was born in Atlanta and that on this projected trip he is only returning to his true home. Mr. Head intends that he shall find out once and for all that this home is nothing to be proud of. It is Mr. Head's expectation that then Nelson will be ready to submit to his grandfather's wisdom, having found out at last that he is not as smart as he thinks he is. (104)

The struggle between them is of a wider scope than over the question of whether Nelson is really going to Atlanta for the first time. There is a hint of the harsh duel which engages them when the first disturbing word intrudes on Mr. Head's reverie in the moonlight: he knows it will *irk* Nelson if his grandfather is up ahead of him, and Mr. Head has every intention of doing so. It is clear at once that each is engaged in provoking the other. Was there ever a beginning to this struggle? Are they committed to this rivalry forever? It is an important sign of

how the day will unfold when in fact Nelson is up well before his grandfather. Mr. Head only awakes to the smell of breakfast cooking, in spite of the trust in his own determination to rouse him in time. It is a first defeat.

Mr. Head's early satisfaction with himself and the world he dominates is matched in kind by the silent gloating of his grandson. Nelson is already up and dressed. He is sitting waiting for his grandfather to wake up and find him already drinking his cold coffee in the half dark. He doesn't say anything, with his hat pulled low over his eyes. He needn't: he can save his remarks for a time when they will be more telling. He knows he has won the first round of the day.

Their life together consists of such attack and counter-attack, well-aimed thrust, parry, and brilliant evasion:

"It's no hurry," Mr. Head says, "You'll get there soon enough and it's no guarantee you'll like it when you do neither." (105)

A moment later he continues:

"You may not like it a bit... It'll be full of niggers." The boy made a face as if he could handle a nigger. "All right," Mr. Head said. "You ain't ever seen a nigger." "You wasn't up very early," Nelson said.

Nelson is clearly 'a child who (is) never satisfied until he (has) given an impudent answer.' (104) But if Mr. Head has his way with the boy, at the end of the trip Nelson will count himself fortunate that he has only been to Atlanta once. Meanwhile Nelson continues to insist that this is his second trip, in spite of the fact that when he left Atlanta he was an infant in the arms of his mother. The euphoria of the opening of the story hardly prepared us for the resentments underlying the stinging exchange between them. It is so funny its deeper sense may pass unobserved. (This was Flannery O'Connor's favorite story, one which she used especially when invited to read aloud.) The old man is confident in his ready wit and his sure authority grounded on experience, though he betrays underlying tension in the persistence with which he needles Nelson. One cannot help relishing their exchanges: each has the same quick, dry wit, the same skill in repartee, in finding the other's weak point every time. Perhaps in the contrast between the early morning dreams of Mr. Head and the sparring going on between him and his grandson, it becomes evident that he may be heading for more trouble than he had imagined. Since the rivals are almost equally matched, we doubt whether the child will after all be crushed. Perhaps, instead, he will learn in time to hate his grandfather with a settled hatred because Mr. Head wants to have it his way always. Nelson has an 'ancient' look, not of wisdom but 'as if he knew everything already and would be pleased to forget it.' (105) Has he any capacity for wonder? Did he have

it perhaps before he set himself on guard against every nasty surprise his grandfather prepares for him? He has learned to expect the worst, to be put down by Mr. Head at every turn, to have his dignity insulted; but was he perhaps born without generosity, without openness anyway? Can it be decided whether it is Nelson who is the cause of the old man's drive to gain control over the rebel lad? Does the real provocation lie in Nelson, while Mr. Head is only making a necessary response? Or are they simply two of a kind?

Surely they are well-matched opponents, astonishingly much the same in their opposition despite the difference in their ages. They look almost exactly alike in feature, so much so that they might even be brothers, we are told. Mr. Head has a youthful expression and the boy, as we have seen, an ancient look. Each from his side closes the huge gap in years between them. Nelson scowls with a fierce expressionless face, as though experience had destroyed any youthful openness in him, if he ever had any, while Mr. Head looks alert and grins. (107) When they sit on the train, Nelson, schooled by his grandfather, puts his hat on his knee, exactly like Mr. Head. They keep converging, and yet the possibility of fierce alienation is there, all the more for their sameness. Their wit is identical, but it is used to sharpen their differences. More deep in their character is their fierce pride expressed in their common fear of being made a fool of: life has taught it to Mr. Head in his long experience and it sears his memory, as when in a large store in Atlanta 'he had got lost. . . and had found his way out only after many people had insulted him.' (114) If he avoids such humiliation when he can, he is equal to it when he can't escape it. When the dining car waiter tries to keep him out of the kitchen declaring haughtily that 'passengers are *not* allowed in the kitchen' Mr. Head stops, turns to him and shouts: 'and there's a good reason for that. . . because the cockroaches would run the passengers out.' (112) Both grandfather and grandson are on guard, wary and armed: both anticipate defeat at the railroad station: what if the train simply fails to stop for them? Each is prepared to ignore the event should it occur, to triumph instead by a feigned indifference. Nelson is surely of the same flesh and blood as Mr. Head, but that seems mostly to contribute to his bitter suspicion and animosity toward his grandfather. They are engaged in the same contest for superiority, but they cannot both win. Sure of his own victory, Mr. Head fails to see what it will do to Nelson. Under his grandfather's pressure, Nelson is sharpening every weapon he has, yet his swift, fierce retaliation may in the end wound him more than his grandfather. Yet not only do they have much in common but they care more than anything else in the world about the other, even if that care is without tenderness, yield-

ing or affection.

How far their situation is then from the fantasies of Mr. Head in the early morning! Nelson is no innocent Tobias to be led by the hand through a series of welcome and wondrous adventures. Mr. Head, as his name suggests, will direct the expedition, but they have not gone far in the lessons he wishes to impart before Nelson begins to suspect that he is not going to enjoy the day at all. Mr. Head is too compromised before he begins and too little aware of himself and his grandson to be able to withstand much more than their first experiences. Before they even set out, Nelson with his sharp-eyed vision asks:

"If you ain't been there in fifteen years, how you know you'll be able to find your way about? . . . How you know it hasn't changed some?"

"Have you ever," Mr. Head asked, "seen me lost?" Nelson certainly had not but he was a child who was never satisfied until he had given an impudent answer and he replied, "It's nowhere around here to get lost at."

"The day is going to come," Mr. Head prophesied, "when you'll find you ain't as smart as you think you are." (104)

As Mr. Head's illusions are stripped away the results could turn out to be comic, but the tension between him and Nelson forebodes catastrophe.

It is not necessary to follow the unfolding of their adventures and their struggle in full detail. As might be expected, Nelson is entranced by the city and is absorbed by its store windows. Radiant with pride he proclaims, to Mr. Head's horror: This is where I come from! Mr. Head sees he must take 'drastic action.' He makes Nelson stick his head in an opening into the sewer system and explains:

. . . how it contained all the drainage and was full of rats and how a man could slide into it and be sucked along down endless pitchblack tunnels. . . Nelson was for some seconds shaken. He connected the sewer passages with the entrance to hell. . . He drew away from the curb.

Then he said, "Yes, but you can stay away from the holes," and his face took on that stubborn look that was so exasperating to his grandfather. "This is where I come from!" he said. (115-116)

Soon Nelson discovers that his grandfather has been going in a circle and promptly observes: "I don't believe you know where you are at." (116) Thereupon Mr. Head gets really lost. They discover that their lunch has been left on the train in their haste to get off. Nelson seizes this advantage to say: "You were the one holding the sack. . . I would have kepaholt of it." (117)

Their misfortunes begin to weigh on them. It is hot. They want to sit down but can't find a safe place to do so in the colored section of the city. They go on walking. Nelson keeps muttering, "First you lost the sack and then you lost the way," while Mr. Head growls, "Anybody

wants to be from this nigger heaven can be from it." (118)

A nigger heaven is by inference a white man's hell. In saying this Mr. Head only intends to mock Nelson's enthusiasm for his native city, but he is also betraying his own anxiety and the effects of his own mistakes. Doubts are assailing him more and more about his morning ambitions. But what he does not yet envision is the way that soon Atlanta will become a living hell for him, leading him to suppose that it would be a relief to slip into one of the sewer holes and disappear forever. Already Mr. Head is somewhat shaken. Perhaps he might have acknowledged his predicament, were it not for the boy's acid spite.

And yet, all during the day there have been moments when Nelson drew near to his grandfather. Although he has been made to feel an idiot by the way his grandfather treats him on the train, he is proud of Mr. Head's triumph with the big black waiter. He realizes then that

. . . the old man would be his only support in the strange place they were approaching. He would be entirely alone in the world if he were ever lost from his grandfather. A terrible excitement shook him and he wanted to take hold of Mr. Head's coat and hold on like a child. (112)

Again, he is about to leap out of his seat at the suburban stop of the train, when Mr. Head orders him to keep his seat: bitter experience on his first trip had taught Mr. Head not to make Nelson's mistake. The author says that Nelson for the first time in his life understood that his grandfather was indispensable to him. And finally, as they realize they are utterly lost in a Negro section of the city, Nelson takes 'hold of the old man's hand, a sign of dependence that he seldom showed.' (117) It must be noted that this is after Mr. Head has shamed him over his disturbing encounter with the large colored woman: "You act like you don't have any sense" the old man had 'growled.' (118)

There is a seesawing back and forth in their relations, as when Mr. Head asserts his authority by the threat "If you want to direct this trip, I'll go on by myself and leave you right here." (117) Mr. Head is pleased to see the boy turn white; earlier when Mr. Head warned him not to lose his ticket, lest he have to stay in the city, Nelson had said: "'Maybe I will,' . . . as if this were a reasonable suggestion." (108) But Nelson keeps on asserting his independent judgment and intelligence: it cannot escape him that his grandfather's direction is not to be trusted. Hot, tired and hungry, Nelson declares he will rest. He sits down and goes to sleep.

Watching the boy Mr. Head realizes that when he wakes up he will be cockier than ever; the weary old man yields to an evil inspiration to teach Nelson a lesson that he will never forget. Sometimes that is necessary, he rea-

sons, with a boy like Nelson, who will not be put down. Mr. Head hides around a corner in an alley and rouses the boy by banging on a garbage can. Nelson wakes up with a start. Not finding his grandfather, he dashes down the street in terror, 'like a wild maddened pony.' (122) When Mr. Head finally catches up with him he has knocked down an older woman who is screaming for the police. Mr. Head approaches them with the greatest timidity and caution, but as he comes nearer Nelson catches sight of him and springs up from where he was sprawled to clasp him around the hips. But Mr. Head imagines that a policeman is approaching from behind. He tries to detach Nelson's fingers from his flesh and says: "This is not my boy . . . I never seen him before." (123) He feels Nelson's fingers fall out of his flesh. The crowd that has gathered gives way in horror at his denying 'his own image and likeness,' (123) obvious from the remarkably close resemblance of the two. Angry as they are, they are unwilling to lay hands on him as if he had revealed himself a monster by denying his own flesh. They break the wall they had made to surround him and he walks off. Nelson trails after him, his 'two small eyes piercing into his back like pitchfork prongs.' (124)

As time passes this way Mr. Head's efforts at reconciliation between them fail. Both are thirsty but Nelson is not tempted to relent by the offer of a Coca Cola. "With a dignity he has never shown before" he 'turned and stood with his back to his grandfather.' Mr. Head begins 'to feel the depth of his denial.' (124) A second effort to get Nelson to drink from the spigot he has found, only leads the child to stare straight through him for nearly sixty seconds. Now Atlanta indeed has become a hell for Mr. Head. He fears they may not make their train, something he was worried about even while Nelson slept, when 'the possibility of missing it was too awful for him to think of.' (122) They are really lost. Mr. Head in his remorse fears that the city will unleash all its horrors on them both. Aware of his own deep disgrace he nevertheless suffers for his grandson, thinking that through his fault he was leading Nelson 'to his doom.' (124) But Nelson's implacable fury travels behind him always at the same fierce distance; Nelson savors his revenge as though this situation were all that he had been living for up until now. Lost, shamed and goaded by the hatred and judgment of his grandson, Mr. Head becomes desperate in the now deserted part of the city. Suddenly he is aroused by a man with two bulldogs that bark; he waves both arms like someone shipwrecked on a desert island. He cries out his agony:

I'm lost . . . I'm lost and can't find my way and me and this boy have got to catch this train and I can't find the station. Oh Gawd I'm lost! Oh hep me Gawd I'm lost! (126)

But the man who comes to his rescue bears no resem-

blance to an angel of mercy. He is fat, baldheaded and wears golf knickers, a ridiculous outfit. In the most matter of fact, but pleasant way he tells Mr. Head they are only three blocks from the suburban stop and can just make the train in time. As if 'returning from the dead' (126) Mr. Head says in wonder: We're going to get home! But Nelson, a little closer now, could not care less. 'His eyes were triumphantly cold. There was no light in them, no feeling, no interest. . . Home was nothing to him.' (127)

Mr. Head's vision in the morning has come to this: he has disgraced himself before everyone, but most of all he has disgraced himself irretrievably in Nelson's eyes. Nelson's 'mind had frozen around his grandfather's treachery as if he were trying to preserve it intact to present at the final judgment.' (125) Mr. Head knew it would continue just that way for the rest of his life.

Or could it be otherwise, even though that might be his just desert? Of course in the ordinary give and take of family life, a way is usually found to get around such seeming deadlocks: children are taught to set aside their indignation and to forgive and forget. No small part of this aspect of their education has been in the hands of their mothers and women in general; but Nelson has not known any women. In any case, such 'forgiveness' is a kind of magnanimity, indulgence or tolerance, a willingness to overlook what has happened, especially if it not recur. It is a great, an almost indispensable condition of peace in the world. But it is often also a sign of a sort of superiority which 'disdains to make much of what it treats as trifles. To a proud nature like Nelson's, one that craves justice, such a compromise has no appeal. Mr. Head, too, would find such condescension intolerable in the end. It would heap coals of fire on his head. The disgrace remains untouched by tolerance, which is essentially galling to pride. Besides, under Nelson's implacable condemnation Mr. Head discovers that his betrayal becomes a heavier and heavier burden, apart from what Nelson or anyone feels. It has made clear in a flash that he is too much of a coward to risk his skin even for his grandson and that there is no limit he will not surpass in order to escape danger. He has shown in that moment the worst that he is capable of, and it is dreadful. He is fully exposed to the light of the sun, which Flannery O'Connor says 'shed a dull dry light,' so that 'everything looked like exactly what it was.' (120) In that light Mr. Head knows that what he has done is monstrous. That same sun in rising made the sky a dull red, reducing the moon to something gray and transparent, 'hardly stronger than a thumbprint and completely without light.' (106) In this hard daylight the moon is 'useless' and Mr. Head is left naked and base before our eyes and his own. There can be no doubt that his vanity and Nelson's proud revenge have come to be seen for exactly

what they are. All that moonlit dignity of noble and divine figures was mere moonshine and shallow illusion. Mr. Head has acted worse than a fool or an idiot, the thing he feared most: he has shown himself to be a sinner, one of the worst, and he knows it.

His treachery resembles that of the apostle Peter. In all of the four gospels the story of Peter's denial is told, and in almost the same way. Jesus knows that he is about to be taken to be crucified. I quote from Luke.

22:31 And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat:

32 But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.

33 And he said unto him, Lord I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death.

34 And he said, I tell thee Peter, the cock shall not crow this day before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me.

An a little later Jesus is taken:

54 Then they took him and led him and brought him into the high priest's house. And Peter followed afar off.

55 And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were set down together, Peter sat down among them.

56 But a certain maid beheld him as he sat by the fire, and earnestly looked upon him and said, This man was also with him.

57 And he denied him, saying, Woman I know him not.

58 And after a little while another saw him, and said, Thou art also of them. And Peter said, Man, I am not.

59 And about the space of one hour after another confidently affirmed saying, Of a truth, this fellow also was with him: for he is a Galilean.

60 And Peter said, Man I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew.

61 And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.

62 And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.

It is almost impossible to imagine to oneself the remorse that Peter felt as he wept so bitterly. No doubt Flannery O'Connor is remembering it when she describes Mr. Head's despair. She is, I sense, also reflecting her reading of Dante's Hell when she says:

He felt he knew now what time would be like without seasons and what heat would be like without light and what man would be like without salvation. (127)

Yet unlike Judas, who also betrayed Jesus, Peter did not go and hang himself. Perhaps he remembered the words of David, the Psalmist:

2 Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not his benefits:
3 Who forgiveth all thine iniquities: who healeth all thy diseases;

4 Who redeemeth thy life from destruction: who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies;

5 Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's. (Psalm 103)

And a little later in the same Psalm:

8 The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.

9 He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger forever.

10 He hath not dealt with us after our sins: nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.

11 For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward those that fear him.

This is a Psalm of David, who, because he had taken Bathsheba, treacherously caused her husband to die. Perhaps when he had drunk the cup of his grief to the dregs Peter took comfort because Jesus had also said to him: When thou art converted strengthen thy brethren. Peter lived to fulfill Jesus' prophecy, when the Lord said:

Thou art Peter (which is to say, a rock) and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. (Matt. 16:15-18)

Few accounts in the gospels have given more comfort than this story of Peter, who denied his Lord and master and was yet chosen to be the foundation and head of His church. The comfort comes, not from the glory at the end, but from the hope that it is possible somehow to get beyond evil done, which seems by its very nature an unalterable fact, utterly irrevocable. It will always be remembered by the doer at least, even if the world is too big or too busy to keep it in mind. It is Jesus' claim to be able to forgive sin, to make it as nought, that expresses his greatest power and the greatest good he confers on men and women. Such forgiveness is not mere generosity, fine as that might be, nor a lofty readiness to overlook another's baseness. It is an unsparing frankness in facing evil, just as when Jesus turned to look upon Peter when he had denied him thrice; and it is also a blotting of it out altogether. Only so, it seems to me, might the Psalmist offer in the end of what I read the renewal of one's youth, of one's innocence, like the eagle's.

But what about Nelson? Suppose, as the crowd of women do when they shrink back in horror from Mr. Head, that Nelson's cold hatred and persecution of his grandfather is justified: is it any the less deadly for him? Does it not freeze him and cut him off from all openness and warmth toward the world? Was that always going to be his way? Is it conceivable that he may forgive, as men are commanded to forgive? On one level it does not seem so. Why should he? How can he, in the face of what his grandfather has done to him?

* * *

Now, with your patience, I must review some of the most important aspects of the story which you must have been puzzled long since at my omitting. This part of the lecture I think of under the heading *The Color Black*. Its motto might be: the moon only shines at night.

In the story blackness has a puzzling ambiguity. In accordance with immemorial tradition, black is the color of what is threatening and evil. For instance, the sewer which Nelson, and later his grandfather, come to associate with hell, is described as 'a pitchblack tunnel,' (115) filled with foul drainage and rats. Yet when Nelson imagines himself looking down and down into the eyes of the large colored woman who calls him sugarpie, he feels as if he were 'reeling down through a pitchblack tunnel.' (119) The ecstasy and terror are expressed with the same image and color.

Let me pursue blackness as evil, first. As Nelson and Mr. Head get into a section of Atlanta where only black people live, they are afraid. The menace they feel culminates in the sentence: 'Black eyes in black faces were watching them from every direction.' (117) Nelson is afraid of the colored men; he doesn't want to be laughed at by colored children. Again, as the sun is going down on them Mr. Head is afraid that if dark overtook them in the city, 'they would be beaten and robbed.' (124) And finally when he loses all hope after Nelson rejects a drink at the spigot and stares right through him, Mr. Head envisages his future 'in a black strange place.' (125) As the story unfolds it seems fitting that the rebel Nelson's pallet was the only dark place in the room that the moonlight has not transformed by its magic. True, the slop jar, out of the shadow and 'made snow-white in the moonlight, appeared to stand guard over him like a small personal angel.' (103) But can that snowy angel save him from his own dark resentment, and his triumph in it?

The two major encounters we have with black people give us a different and much more complex sense of blackness. Both of the colored people are different from Mr. Head and his grandson: they seem sure of themselves and almost at ease, where we see the other two as tense, on edge, suspicious, cautious, fierce and afraid. Even Mr. Head's calm dignity and serene expression have their fragility. He first loses them for the reader when the tremendous coffee-colored man comes down the aisle of the train. Until then Mr. Head seems sure of himself, even in the provoking exchanges with Nelson: he imagines that he knows how the excursion to Atlanta will work out. But when the majestic man with the yellow satin tie and ruby pin comes along, making deliberate and slow-moving progress with his black cane and his train of two young women, 'a light fierce and cautious both' comes into Mr. Head's eyes. (109) 'He caught Nelson by the arm' and as the procession goes by, his grip tightens insistently. The huge man gazes over the heads of all the passengers, nor does Mr. Head look him in the face. There is something opulent and exotic about the procession as it passes, rich and generous, filled out by the young women with their throaty voices and the man's

sapphire ring; but they put Mr. Head on edge, and when he and Nelson see them again, separated by a saffron curtain from the rest of the passengers, Mr. Head explains with triumphant disgust: 'They rope them off.' (110) He talks as if they were pigs. Then, too, our eye is directed to the man's heavy, sad face.

The truth is, I think, that Mr. Head is afraid. The source of his ferocity toward the blacks is his fear, his fear of what is other than himself. The sign of his attitude toward what is black is expressed clearly when he says, "There hasn't been a nigger in this county since we run that one out twelve years ago." (105) Nelson has grown up in a pure environment: he has never seen a "nigger." It is impossible for Mr. Head to imagine himself living with what is black. He is a fanatic, a purist. He is a man who recognizes himself as 'upright and brave,' (115) whom all his friends admire. He has been too good to need forgiveness, to deserve mercy. His approach to what he sees as evil is to drive it out brutally, whether in himself, in Nelson or in their surroundings. He does not understand what it means that the moon can only shine in the black night. When he cannot escape the blackness in himself, he can only despair. Yet, when he learns that he can no longer rope it off or run it out, maybe there will be some hope that like Peter the apostle he can exchange his confidence in himself, which rests on a vain delusion, for a knowledge that Dante's Vergil possessed: the knowledge that it is only by passing through the valley of the shadow of death that he can reach his true country and a province of joy. Up until now he has, like Nelson, thought you could simply keep away from the holes that lead down into the lower depths. But man is not born to live lilywhite. He is born to sin and to the need for atonement and redemption. This knowledge comes to Mr. Head only after he admits his own blackness; it is mediated by the shattered image of a wretched Negro.

But Mr. Head is far from that understanding when he catechizes Nelson about the tremendous coffee-colored man. Nelson, who has never seen a Negro, answers his questions with the innocence of pure reason.

"What was that?" (Mr. Head inquires)...

"A man."...

"What kind of a man?"...

"A fat man."...

"You don't know what kind?"...

"An old man."...

"That was a nigger." (110)

Deliberately humiliated by his grandfather, tricked by the endless ambiguity of blackness, Nelson feels a fierce, raw fresh hate for the cause of this insult to his intelligence. He supposes he knows now why his grandfather dislikes them. He feels that the Negro had deliberately walked down the aisle to make a fool of him. His first real en-

counter with the alien, the unknown, the truly other has made a fool of him, thanks to his grandfather. But it is not only his grandfather's doing that there is an alienation in the world. As Hegel knew, and Marx after him, man makes his own alienation and must suffer first if it is to be overcome.

Nelson's second real involvement with a Negro is the black woman he asks directions of when they are lost. Not knowing what he is about Mr. Head prompts their encounter, because he is too proud and too scared to ask a black person for help. No words of mine should intrude on this great scene:

Up ahead he saw a large colored woman leaning in a doorway that opened onto the sidewalk. Her hair stood straight out from her head for about four inches all around and she was resting on bare brown feet that turned pink at the sides. She had on a pink dress that showed her exact shape. As they came abreast of her, she lazily lifted one hand to her head and her fingers disappeared into her hair.

Nelson stopped. He felt his breath drawn up by the woman's dark eyes. "How do you get back to town?" he said in a voice that did not sound like his own.

After a minute she said, "You in town now," in a rich low tone that made Nelson feel as if a cool spray had been turned on him.

"How do you get back to the train?" he said in the same reed-like voice.

"You can catch you a car," she said.

He understood she was making fun of him but he was too paralyzed even to scowl. He stood drinking in every detail of her. His eyes traveled up from her great knees to her forehead and then made a triangular path from the glistening sweat on her neck down and across her tremendous bosom and over her bare arm back to where her fingers lay hidden in her hair. He suddenly wanted her to reach down and pick him up and draw him against her and then he wanted to feel her breath on his eyes while she held him tighter and tighter. He had never had such a feeling before. He felt as if he were reeling down through a pitchblack tunnel.

"You can go a block down yonder and catch you a car take you to the railroad station, Sugarpie," she said.

Nelson would have collapsed at her feet if Mr. Head had not pulled him roughly away. "You act like you don't have any sense!" the old man growled. (118-119)

Referring in a letter to this moment in the story Flannery O'Connor commented:

I meant for her in an almost physical way to suggest the mystery of existence to him — he not only has never seen a nigger but he didn't know any women and I felt that such a black mountain of maternity would give him the required shock to start those black forms moving up from his unconscious. (78)

The woman is utterly alien to him, black, maternal, female, for it is impossible for me not to sense the first stirrings in the boy of the erotic, whose distinction from the maternal remains one of the great puzzles of a man's life. Nelson longs to be embraced by her, tighter and tighter. He senses the 'pitchblack tunnel' (119) as a road

to the fulfillment of his heart's desire, a desire he never knew before but discovers in her. With the wisdom of his inexperience, at the same moment that he wants to be drawn up somehow into her, he wants to collapse at her feet in acknowledgement of the goddess. He has met his other in its full otherness and he is prepared to overcome its alienness in any way that he can.

Mr. Head intervenes roughly and shames him over and over: "And standing there grinning like a chim-pan-zee while a nigger woman gives you directions. Great Gawd." (120) But the black goddess has done her work: as Nelson dozes on the pavement he is conscious of "vague noises and black forms moving up from some dark part of him into the light. His face worked in his sleep. . . ." (121) As he fell asleep his shoulders twitched as though some involuntary power were working within him. Later this notion becomes more explicit, when he is following his grandfather to torment him, like an implacable fury from hell, his eyes like pitchfork prongs:

...his mind had frozen around his grandfather's treachery as if he were trying to preserve it intact to present at the final judgment. He walked without looking to one side or the other, but every now and then his mouth would twitch and this was when he felt, from some remote place inside himself, a black mysterious form reach up as if it would melt his frozen vision in one hot grasp. (125)

In some ways Nelson seems an emissary from hell, an Ate to take vengeance on those who betray their family. But more truly, what he found in his longing for the great black woman was to plunge into the fullness of life, black and white. No wonder it makes him drunk with its all-embracing power so he goes reeling down the pitchblack tunnel that is as yet only a prison for Mr. Head, made of his blind and narrow despair.

But even for him, as the deadening sun fades, out of the gathering dusk his attention is caught by something like a cry. It draws him out of his utter indifference to everything he might ever care for.

He didn't care if he never made the train and if it had not been for what suddenly caught his attention, like a cry out of the gathering dusk, he might have forgotten there was a station to go to.

He had not walked five hundred yards down the road when he saw, within reach of him, the plaster figure of a Negro sitting bent over on a low yellow brick fence that curved around a wide lawn. The Negro was about Nelson's size and he was pitched forward at an unsteady angle because the putty that held him to the wall had cracked. One of his eyes was entirely white and he held a piece of brown watermelon.

Mr. Head stood looking at him silently until Nelson stopped at a little distance. Then as the two of them stood there, Mr. Head breathed, "An artificial nigger!"

It was not possible to tell if the artificial Negro were meant to be young or old; he looked too miserable to be either. He

was meant to look happy because his mouth was stretched up at the corners but the chipped eye and the angle he was cocked at gave him a wild look of misery instead.

"An artificial nigger!" Nelson repeated in Mr. Head's exact tone.

The two of them stood there with their necks forward at almost the same angle and their shoulders curved in almost exactly the same way and their hands trembling identically in their pockets. Mr. Head looked like an ancient child and Nelson like a miniature old man. They stood gazing at the artificial Negro as if they were faced with some great mystery, some monument to another's victory that brought them together in their common defeat. They could both feel it dissolving their differences like an action of mercy. Mr. Head had never known before what mercy felt like because he had been too good to deserve any, but he felt he knew now. He looked at Nelson and understood that he must say something to the child to show that he was still wise and in the look the boy returned he saw a hungry need for that assurance. Nelson's eyes seemed to implore him to explain once and for all the mystery of existence.

Mr. Head opened his lips to make a lofty statement and heard himself say, "They ain't got enough real ones here. They got to have an artificial one."

After a second, the boy nodded with a strange shivering about his mouth, and said, "Let's go home before we get ourselves lost again." (127-128)

Puzzled as we are by this account, we see at once the effect of this artificial nigger: the deadly gap between grandfather and grandson is closed: they speak identical words in an identical tone. Once more they look and act exactly alike, each as much a human as the other, each in a desperate need of help, of mercy.

What can we make of this plaster figure himself, this obscene monument to the despotic power of masters? When the master tires of the exercise of brute force over the bondsman, he wants a more flattering image of his power. His lordship, grounded though it is in violence, is to be sugared over by the happy smiles of his grateful slaves. Hence are born those revolting statues of jolly, eager, liveried little black men, that infest the American landscape, grinning and eating their watermelon. This one is woefully defaced, but he was meant to look happy. In saying this Flannery O'Connor has, as so often, a double meaning: the master wants his bondsman to look as though he loved his bondage; but more fundamentally, she means that every man and woman and child is created by God to enjoy blessedness.

This one instead in his disfigured state has a wild look of misery. How has that misery served to bring Nelson back to his proper place beside his grandfather and liberated his grandfather from the intolerable burden of his knowledge of his own blackness?

Behind that broken figure leaning forward, with the wild look of misery, am I wrong to see the figure proclaimed by Isaiah, the suffering servant of the Lord,

in and from whom there is a promise of healing and peace for all men? All through the centuries of their oppression the Jewish people have placed their trust in these words; they have trusted that their suffering had a meaning beyond itself and a hidden purpose. It not only marks them as God's chosen and beloved, but by its means the iniquity of all men is to be atoned for. In that belief, some devout Jews died in the horrors of Hitler's concentration camps.

Let us listen for a moment to Isaiah: "Behold my servant: . . . he shall be exalted and extolled and be very high." (52:13) Yet right away the prophet goes on to say:

53:2 . . . he hath no form nor comeliness and when we shall see him there is no beauty that we should desire him.
3 He is despised and rejected of men and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised and we esteemed him not.
4 Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.
5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him and with his stripes we are healed.
6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.
7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

And again later Isaiah says:

61:1 The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty unto the captives, and the opening of prison to them that are bound;
2 To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn;
3 To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness: that they might be called the trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified.

These passages declare to me, as to a long tradition of readers, that the glory denied to the servant of the Lord at one time, will be seen one day by all, as it is always beheld by God Himself; that what is repellent in the drab light of day will be exalted and extolled in the end. That by a servant's stripes we shall be reconciled and healed. Thinking, I believe, of these words of Isaiah, one whom many believe to have been that servant himself said:

Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.
Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.
Blessed are they which hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. (Matt. 5:4-6)

And a little later:

Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.
Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (9-10)

As the demeaning light of day yields to the gathering dusk this cry of hope is heard. Indeed, one day the Lord may take vengeance against those whose injustice has caused the suffering of the meek, but even more important is the fact that it is by their suffering that the world at large is set free from its bondage to itself.

The artificial nigger is a monument 'to another's victory.' (128) First, in an obvious way, he is a monument to the merely worldly victory of the strong over the weak, of the master over the slave. But that is of little significance compared to the victory whereby men and women who have been defeated and enslaved exercise a saving power reserved to them and their suffering alone. The first is a hollow victory, the other the only eternal one and the source of all ultimate rejoicing in the world.

Mr. Head and Nelson do not see this just like that. But they feel its power at work in them as they draw together, side by side, each once more the very image of the other, the old and the young united. They see that victim and they wonder at it. Things begin to be restored to their best, to the vision of the early morning which has proved so false during the day and which yet begins to restore itself in the twilight. As is proper, when all things are at their best, the child can look to his elder for understanding. But all Mr. Head can say is: They ain't got enough real ones here. They got to have an artificial one. (128) He senses the superfluosness of adding even one artificial nigger to the terrible burden on the souls of white men and women caused by the presence of millions of real black men and women oppressed by them. Such a statue is, as Flannery O'Connor wrote in a letter 'a terrible symbol of what the South has done to itself.' (140) Or, as she wrote in another letter, 'There is nothing that screams out the tragedy of the South' (101) as such statuary does. It is, as we have seen, the ultimate corrupting effort of the tyrant to flatter himself at the expense of a whole people's misery. Yet if indeed it turns out that it is also a monument to the victory of those who suffer and of their power to redeem and to prompt 'an action of mercy,' (128) as Flannery O'Connor calls it, they are the opposite of superfluous. Though they remind all feeling men of the iniquity of their suffering, they also bring to the fore the power that brings good out of evil, that reduces evil to the ultimate nothingness that it is.

Such a power is forgiveness: Nelson's response to his grandfather is to say, in direct opposition to his usually

unforgiving nature: Let's go home before we get ourselves lost again. (128) He speaks as if they had shared equally in the responsibility of their getting lost, and perhaps even in the expedition itself, something Nelson had denied in his rage at his grandfather's betrayal. (120) By a power that seems to come from beyond himself, he becomes reconciled with his grandfather and freely takes on himself as well whatever blame attaches to Mr. Head. Now he is free to turn home, home which a moment before 'was nothing to him.' (127)

The mysterious power that Flannery O'Connor ascribes to the monument and that brings Nelson and Mr. Head together, and both of them together with the broken plaster figure of the Negro and with all of the slaves and the abused blacks that he represents, its effectiveness in Nelson, it seems, rests on those black mysterious forms that cause 'a strange shivering about his mouth' (128) when he speaks consolingly to his grandfather. Earlier they were working to 'melt his frozen vision in one hot grasp,' (125) to release him from his subjection to his moral outrage at his grandfather's denial of him. There can be no doubt that what first came to him in the 'black mountain of maternity,' the first woman that he knew and felt as a woman, that worked on him as he slept under the pitiless light of day and later when he became his most malignant, these black forms are what prepared him to receive the action of mercy that sprang from the artificial nigger. In this story the ambiguity of blackness is resolved: black is the color of human redemption through suffering, the means of reconciliation and peace. Black as darkness, the enemy of light, and as a source of fear to Mr. Head and Nelson is no more, and no less, than the ultimately powerless illusion, which melts before the triumphant power of suffering that redeems, in this case the suffering of black men and women. Nonetheless we cannot forget the ruin which has been made of that figure of plaster who was meant to look happy: we must pursue justice with every power we possess. Yet as the sun goes down the real victory is certified by the power of that broken and crucified nigger.

This perception is quickly confirmed in the story. The sun, that by its matter-of-fact light reveals everything at its worst, has gone down by the time Nelson and his grandfather get back to their junction. As before, they fear the train will not stop; but it does and as they get off, 'the moon, restored to its full splendor, sprang from a cloud and flooded the clearing with light. As they stepped off, the sage grass was shivering gently in shades of silver, and the clinkers under their feet glittered with a fresh black light.' (128) The moon, gracious ruler of the night, silvers the scene and makes the fresh black glisten in all its glory. By its light everything is seen at its best, as what it truly is, redeemed not only from its mere fac-

tuality, but from the surrounding darkness of night.

The story might easily have been content to mock Mr. Head's early vision of his role as a guide on a moral mission. Indeed, it shows his inadequacy to it, but it also restores his vision at the end, corrected. What moved him at first was hardly love for his nephew nor for good in itself, yet equally as much it must be said that if he and Nelson have passed through a kind of hell on earth, they end up closer by far than they would have had Mr. Head succeeded in breaking Nelson's rebellious spirit by the force of his will. Instead, broken himself, he is approached by the small, silent and searching judge who miraculously moves him to accept forgiveness.

The train which bore them from the junction at the day's beginning emerged from a tunnel, like a demon from the pitchblack tunnels of hell, terrified by the cold light of day. At the day's end it disappears 'like a frightened serpent.' (129) In both of these images it has something of the serpent of Eden, the instrument whereby Nelson and his grandfather are brought to a season in hell. From that perspective their home in the country is their true country, to which Raphael might have led them, and so it seems to Nelson at the very end. But at the same time, his sense of its blessing has only been achieved because he has had an experience in Atlanta, an experience of the black shapes that move within him and that suggest a possibility for understanding and love, an experience of a different sort from his grandfather's. It is he that has been moved by the wonderful, godlike character of the huge black woman, and who, we feel, will never be the same as long as her power stirs within him. How such a change will manifest itself is left for the future, but his nature as a rebel might, in my imagining, carry him far.

As for Mr. Head, has his lilywhite conception that separates evil and good in an unqualified way suffered any modification in the presence of the artificial nigger? It is perhaps idle to speculate: the opportunity is before him. In the next to the final paragraph Flannery O'Connor speaks the whole sense of the power of the moon's light, of the redemption through agony and of the transformation of evil into good. Mr. Head begins with the belief that his moral rectitude will be enough to get him through the day, as through life in general. When that fails him in the worst way, what he seeks, and finds, is a less simplistic view, one in which despite evil done and failure, betrayal and judgment, there is hope for forgiveness and renewal, like the young eagle's.

In one way it seems to me that the train, as the serpent of Eden, has led Mr. Head and his grandson to betray themselves to the worst that is in them: vain pride and base fear on the one side, and on the other rebellion and deadly hatred. But at the same time their sojourn in this

hell has brought Mr. Head to know that he is not one of the great guides of men, but a mere creature like others, one with high aspirations, but who in fact gets utterly lost, endangering the grandson he really loves; that he is a being who has no recourse but to call on God in his abject despair and humiliation. But thus he opens himself to the mercy that 'covered his pride like a flame and consumed it.' (129) Nelson, watching his grandfather, feels in his fatigue the resonance of his inveterate suspicion of him, but even his dark and naturally scowling face lights up at the end in the miraculous light of the moon, letting its grace work on him for one more moment. It reveals what he really is within so that he can say: I'm glad I went once, but I'll never go back again. (129) He sacrifices in these simple words his pride in being different, in being born in Atlanta, his superiority over his grandfather and his resentment of him.

In a letter Flannery O'Connor said that her disposition was a combination of Nelson's and Hulga's (101); Hulga is at the center of another of her stories. She adds that perhaps she flattered herself. Hulga's shallow but brightly optimistic mother christened her 'Joy,' but at the first opportunity she changed it herself legally to Hulga, the ugliest name she could think of. Of Hulga Flannery

O'Connor wrote (in 'Good Country People'):

Her constant outrage [at the world in general and her mother in particular] had obliterated every expression from her face. . . . [She has] the look of someone who had achieved blindness by an act of will and meant to keep it. (171)

Is it not fitting that Flannery O'Connor, who could know in herself the capacity to blind herself deliberately to all the wonder of the world, should write of a light that in bestowing itself unstintingly makes the world a wonder to discover, a joy to behold in its fresh black light? Such a light restores their true dignity not only to Nelson and Mr. Head, but to all the insulted, degraded and abused, while setting them free not only of their chains, but of their hate, their fear and their wounded pride. I wonder if Nelson ever said 'I'm glad' about anything? True, he only mutters it.

*All page references to the stories are to *A Good Man is Hard to Find and Other Stories*, Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich Harvest/HBS edition, 1977. Those to the letters are to *The Habit of Being*, Vintage Books, 1980.

The Shattering of the Natural Order

E. A. Goerner

It is not very new to say that we are in the midst of a world-civilizational crisis or period of revolutionary changes centered in the so-called first and second worlds which constitute the area of predominantly European culture. The very title of this series, "The Broken Mirror; Changing Values in the Modern Age," may be thought to hint, as darkly and as fragmentarily as only a broken mirror may, at something of the sort. Moreover, it has become a commonplace, since Alexis de Tocqueville published his *Democracy in America*, to point out that it is a crisis in which America necessarily plays a pivotal role. Our communal life, weighed down with fewer of the resistant traditions of the old world and characterized by the special dynamisms peculiar to the new world, stands at the leading edge of the development of the world-civilizational developments that have their origins in European culture.

What I wish to reflect upon here is a central feature of that crisis that is coming to a head in our part of the twentieth century that I would like to call "shattering of the natural order." What I have in mind by that phrase is the **shattering of nature** as a given, fixed, sacred, normative context and structure for human life.

Taken in its broadest sense, the shattering of the natural order as a norm of life had already begun in classical antiquity but was interrupted by the barbarian invasions only to begin again in the latter part of the middle ages

and the early modern period in a somewhat modified form. The fundamental intellectual or spiritual orientations that have shattered the order of nature as the norm of life are not peculiar to our time. But what is special to our time is the translation of those orientations, which were once the property of a relatively restricted philosophical and scientific elite, into revolutionary technological changes that are now transforming the lives and thoughts of the mass of ordinary men and women.

Because so much of our twentieth-century replacement of the world of nature by a technological artifact seems so unprecedented, it is easy to misunderstand it for lack of a proper context. I should like to begin with an attempt to provide, in very rough brush strokes, a broad context for my main thesis about the end of the natural order.

In the great cosmological empires of the ancient world (Egypt of the pharaohs, the successive empires of Mesopotamia, China, Japan) the amazing order of the natural cosmos was seen and worshipped as divine in such a way that the proper conduct of life consisted in conforming one's individual life and especially the life of society as a whole to the patterns established by that cosmic order. Society as a whole could be understood as a micro-cosmic replication of the great and divine cosmic, that is to say natural, order. The main function of the ruler, whether conceived of as a god in Egypt, as the Son of Heaven in Japan, as holder of the mandate of Heaven in China, or steward of the gods in Mesopotamia, was simply to ensure that the earthly affairs of their societies reproduced the ever repeated order of the cosmic rhythms. These systems of thought and life were astonishingly stable over long periods of time but all succumbed to a set of inner problems and devastating shocks from the outside. The Chinese and Japanese empires only

Edward A. Goerner is a professor of Government at Notre Dame University. He was Bill O'Grady's teacher. Remembering Bill O'Grady Professor Goerner writes, "I have the clear impression that the likes of him are much rarer in our present environment than they were two decades ago, making his memory blaze up like some life-saving bonfire on a frozen shore."

began to break down the strains produced by western intrusions beginning in the nineteenth century. But the cosmological empires of Mesopotamia and north Africa that were in contact with Europe, especially through Greece, were under severe strain well before the birth of Christ. In Egypt, where the order of nature was incredibly regular and favorable to an agricultural civilization, and even the problem of death seemed to have been successfully dealt with by the techniques of mummification and the practices associated with the construction of necropolises, the second intermediate period, during which the tombs were widely plundered and destroyed, left a deep anxiety in its wake. In Mesopotamia the insertion of human society into the cosmic order was always problematic, as the evidence from the New Year's festival shows, and the religion of the cosmic gods did nothing to deal with the problem of death, as the Gilgamesh epic shows. The attempts at radical religious reform by the Pharaoh Akhenaton and the departure from the Egyptian fleshpots by the Israelites under Moses and their subsequent rejection of Mesopotamian religious forms are all signs of a crisis in fundamental beliefs about the nature and relations of man, the world, and the divine.

Among the ancient Greeks, never fully incorporated into a wholly cosmological structure of thought or society and open to the perplexities flowing from a growing knowledge of the diversity of beliefs about the intra-cosmic gods, the experience of the progressive weakening of the pagan mode of religious perception and practice led to a whole set of attempts within the educated classes to find a new ground of order for life not in visible nature but in the intelligible order of the soul, a process that generally took the name of philosophy. The philosophic revolution among the educated was, with a time lag, accompanied by a religious revolution among the masses who converted to a transcendent God and away from paganism, the religions of the natural forces, necessarily polytheistic and varied according as, in different places and contexts, nature manifested herself differently.

On the political level, the conquests of Alexander the Great brought an end to the great cosmological pagan empires of Egypt and Mesopotamia, i.e. an end to astonishingly powerful and long-lived attempts to erect world orders envisaged as microcosmic replications of the natural order of the cosmos. The Hellenistic conquests ended a period of almost three thousand years during which the principle of political order was the given order of the cosmos. They did so both by importing Greek philosophy and the Greek sense of history and by shattering the claims of the Great King and of the Pharaoh to be the secure representative of the unchanging cosmic order.

In the flux produced by the overthrow of the cosmological empires, there was a long period of struggle in which the ultimate form or frame of reference for the successor empire, that of Rome, was at issue. A reactionary current attempted to re-constitute the empire as a cosmological one, which one can symbolize by the title *sol invictus*, invincible sun, assumed by some emperors. A philosophical current, which one can symbolize in the Emperor Marcus Aurelius, envisaged an empire governed by a kind of philosopher-king.

Finally, there was the current of transcendent religion which, speaking very generally, took two main forms. There were the world-denying forms of gnosticism such as the Manicheism of which St. Augustine was an adept before his conversion to Christianity. Here the visible, bodily, natural world was taken as essentially evil, an enormous snare and delusion. By contrast with the inhabitant of the classical cosmological empire for whom the experience of the order of the cosmos was an experience of the sacred, of the divine powers that made and governed the world, the manichee viewed the very same natural phenomena as a trap set by the demonic forces designed to keep human beings unaware of the divine spark hidden in their evil flesh, a divine spark which ought to be liberated to escape the world and be re-united with its radically other-worldly divine source. Politically, that meant that one could have no loyalty to the kingdoms and empires of the world, all of which were evil and especially so insofar as they were organized and functioned in terms of the symbols of the natural cosmic order.

The other major form that the current of transcendent religion took was that of orthodox Christianity which did indeed affirm the transcendence of God, thereby responding to the spiritual distress produced by the progressive discovery in the ancient world that the cosmos was not itself divine, but also affirmed the goodness of the world in important ways. The material world is good in its origins according to the *logos* doctrine of St. John's gospel. Moreover, although the created world is seen as marred by sin, it is redeemable rather than something to be despised and escaped. This fundamental goodness of the created, material world is expressed in the doctrine of the incarnation, affirming that the divine Word itself became flesh in Jesus, and in the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, affirming that bodiliness itself is so good that it is capable of a transformation and elevation suitable to being in a more direct relation to the world-transcendent God.

This orthodox Christian account of the status and value of the natural material world of which human beings are an integral part was the one that eventually came to be the accepted truth of the matter in the Roman Empire in

its dying days. Politically, it meant that the things of this world, including political rule, had a sacredness insofar as they reflected the creative mind and will of God from whom the world came, including the world of human nature and political order. At the same time, the emperor and the order he maintained could no longer be thought of as sacred in the full sense of being themselves simply divine.

It is idle to speculate on the direction that developments might have taken if left to themselves. They were interrupted by the barbarian invasions which, by driving the empire back to the level of hunting-gathering and primitive agriculture, postponed the full working out of the civilizational issues at the heart of the collapse in classical times of the religions of the forces of nature. In any case, as the middle ages ended, the philosophic and scientific revolutions of emerging modernity launched a still more radical attack on the conception of nature as the norm of human action. It is characteristic of modernity that human artifice is clearly seen as a superior alternative to the chaos of nature.

In social terms, the famous "state of nature" is described as a chaotic condition of war, according to Hobbes, or as so unstable as not even to be constantly a state of anything, war included, according to Locke and Rousseau. On the level of the physical world, continental rationalists abandon all hope of discovering an order given in and manifested by the material world, all of whose phenomena are of doubtful interpretation; rather, an intelligible order of the world is to be constructed based on the single indubitable experience of the self. The English empiricists also replace the given, natural chaos by a world of artifice, but theirs is constructed on the basis of experimentally falsifiable hypotheses.

Well, at this stage of the argument someone must be saying: if the civilizational crisis we are facing operates on **this** scale, there doesn't seem to be any reason to think it is coming to its denouement in the next few years in America or even in the next century or so, nor does it seem likely that Americans can form a very clear idea of just where they fit in such a development that extends over millennia. And so, finally, it is even less clear that America can have any reasonably foreseeable and desired impact, one way or another, on processes of such glacial movement.

However, what is peculiar to our time and place is this: the deep spiritual-intellectual re-orientations away from nature and towards its replacement by a comprehensive human artifice were once only the intellectual projects of a small, scientific-philosophic elite. But now the technological manifestations of the modern project have begun to revolutionize everyday life in ways that were, until quite recently, scarcely imaginable. Moreover, the **pace**

of the technological revolution whereby nature is replaced by artifice seems to be accelerating. The everyday perceptions of the world by the great mass of our population are changing rapidly in deep but dramatic ways, in economics, agriculture, medicine, genetics, communications, politics, art. Many of those changes are in conflict with the last social structures, including the family, that were inherited from the natural world in terms of which much of our traditional moral teaching was articulated. Finally, those new perceptions of the world are in conflict with many of the perceptions through which many men and women had come to experience God.

In fact, all of those areas are closely interrelated parts of a comprehensive civilizational project at the leading edge of which America now stands, scientifically, technologically, economically. That project is quite simply the conquest of nature by human technology so that nature and natural processes are replaced by an artificial human construct and artificial processes.

At the deepest level, now for the first time widely shaping mass public consciousness, the natural order of things has come to be understood as nothing more than one particular and non-privileged arrangement at a particular moment in cosmic evolution. That order changes of its own accord and, more to the point, at the particular stage at which we now live, changes in every order of things tend, more and more, to flow from human technological interventions which occur at an ever faster rate with ever broader consequences. In other words, the transformative developments that have moved with a glacial slowness over millennia are no longer proceeding at that pace and **we** shall have to face the massive consequences of changes begun long ago by others but just now coming to a climax.

Let me descend from the level of abstractions to an example from the more concrete structures of a particular line of practice, agriculture, whose seemingly changeless patterns over millennia established a rural or peasant culture much of the content of which, suitably baptized, constituted a kind of bed-rock of human experience which much Christian moral teaching took for granted. The speed with which the foundations of that rural or peasant culture have been destroyed in the western world is amazing. When I was a boy, my family and I used to spend the summers living in an unused barn that had been fixed up to live in. Every one of the agricultural processes which I saw and participated in on the adjacent farms and which were customarily seen as manifestations of God's bounty has been replaced by artificial and industrialized processes. No longer does the bull mount the cows. They are artificially inseminated or perhaps participate in the genetic process solely by carrying to term embryos of super-cows fertilized *in vitro*. No chickens run

in the farmyard nor does any rooster crow to herald the dawn and Peter's shame. They live out their short lives in metal cages without ever putting a foot on the ground or knowing when cock-crow comes since their coops are lit by electric lights to lengthen their eating day so they fatten up more quickly on their standardized and artificial diet with their beaks cut off in such a way that they cannot work off their pent-up aggressions by pecking one another to death.

That is all old hat. Everyone knows that the far greater technological revolution in agriculture is just starting. Hitherto inexistent species and varieties of plants and animals will be created from one day to the next in genetic engineering laboratories. The slow evolutionary success of species and the much faster, but still very slow, process of plant and animal breeding will be replaced by annual model changes and, perhaps, by protein, fat, and fiber grown directly in huge industrial versions of today's test tubes—without all of those low demand, low-profit side products like heads and feet, lungs and bones.

Now I don't want to oversimplify things. The patterns and rhythms of agriculture were not wholly natural by any means. In that sense, only the wilderness or the Garden of Eden was natural. That was recognized in certain ancient Mesopotamian myths. Man was said to have been made to do the hard work of caring for growing plants and animals in order to relieve the gods of this tiresome work which they previously had had to do for themselves before human agriculture and herding were introduced. Nevertheless, the character of the agricultural and herding economies was such that men only cooperated with and helped along processes that were already established by nature.

The industrial revolution took us much further from nature much faster. But the great upheavals in the patterns of life produced by the industrial revolution will, I think, seem small by comparison with those that we are now entering upon. The typical machines of the industrial revolution were surely artificial enough, but they were still close enough to nature and natural experiences that one could see and feel how they worked, comparing them to their obvious natural analogues. As a little boy I was a great taker-apart of things. I remember taking apart a little gasoline engine used for model airplanes. I could see how it worked. And I could feel the compressive force and the suction of the cylinder as it moved up and down. And the same with the toy steam engine I took apart. I could see and feel the power of the gases that drove those engines when I made little bottle bombs by putting baking soda and vinegar in a corked bottle and watching the cork blow off. And the first thing I took apart was, much to my mother's irritation, a kitchen scale that I broke in the process. But I could see how the gears worked and

I could feel the springiness of the steel spring and compare it with the springiness of saplings I had bent and let snap back. My son understands how microchips are made and what they do. But he could never have found that out by looking at or feeling them or taking them apart and comparing them to natural things he knows.

I do not mention any of this with a view to celebrating as an alternative the good-old peasant life of some by-gone age but simply with a view to pointing out that the same technological processes that we have used to transform the lives of plants and animals in astounding ways are now being introduced into the socio-biological processes of mankind. The modern technological project set out to relieve man's estate, as Bacon put it, by way of the scientifico-technical conquest of nature. What that may turn out to mean has just begun to make itself fully felt in the fact that the conquering army has, as was inevitable, turned around and begun to conquer that very part of nature, ourselves, whence it set out. The chemical regulation of fertility, the relatively easy mechanical interruption of pregnancy, i.e. artificial birth control and abortion, are only hints of what is on the way. Every conceivable relationship having to do with human reproduction is in the process of radical transformation. During the summer of 1984 I followed a court case in France in which a young widow [a Mme. Parpalaix] obtained a court order, after considerable public and judicial debate, granting her possession of the frozen sperm of her dead husband by whom she wished to bear an orphan. That, of course, is just a human version of a process common for some time in animal husbandry. It is only the beginning of a development in which the natural act of copulation is being replaced for purposes of reproduction by one or more processes now the subject of intensive work: not only *in vitro* fertilization but, eventually, *in vitro* gestation as a whole, ultimately of human beings whose genetic make-up is itself structurally artificial. Moreover, the modification of the genetic make-up of already living animals and, therefore, of humans too seems to be inescapably on the way.

What leverage can traditional moral thinking, rooted in the rightness of natural processes, have on such technological processes? What can the family, the nuclear remnant of once-powerful bio-social structures, mean in a context in which women conceive orphans by dead husbands or, soon, when children are born or, rather, constructed or reconstructed by biological materials whose origins cannot be localized as belonging to any particular historical persons? Will they be the children of whatever person or corporation holds the patent on the genetic process or of the licensee who used the technique to produce them? and what does "children of" mean in that context? Will not the production of new species in-

intermediate between men and animals become possible and, thus, sooner or later happen?

Such technological changes are obviously not isolated but are rather part of the vast technological revolution in which we are engaged so that we are both surrounded by and are ourselves becoming ever more artificial products of man's conquest of nature, of every form and every process that is simply given. Moreover, the desire to acquire that power is so vast that we categorize the parts of the world in accordance with the degree to which they have acquired such powers, the degree to which they are developed, developing or under-developed. The desire for that power is so great that we harness ourselves like slaves or draft animals to its realization. We submit ourselves to all sorts of risks and hardships so as to keep the revolutionary process of ever-expanding technological power going.

For quite some time in the modern world major technological changes have produced major forms of social disorganization. Those changes have occurred in quite short periods of time as civilizational changes go. In most of the technologically advanced countries a majority of the population was driven from rural, agricultural life to urban, industrial existence in a matter of a generation or two, sometimes by means of governmental force and terror as under Stalin, sometimes by the forces of the capitalist market backed by the police. Those changes seem to have been only the foretaste of a kind of epidemic nomadism in which industry shifts from place to place in response to technological changes in industrial processes as well as other causes producing an almost universal deracination.

In the shift from rural to urban life there was room for a large number of relatively unskilled laborers. The direction of present technological change, on the other hand, seems to provide ever less room for productive life for large numbers of people whose native or developed capacities do not fit them for participation in an economy where unskilled or semi-skilled labor is in decreasing demand.

An immediate consequence of such changes is permanent structural unemployment for large numbers of people who are unlikely, often for the rest of their lives, to have any prospect of stable, respected, and decently paid work, their capacities being as little in demand as steam driven automobiles. In the longer run, it seems inevitable that proposals will be made and funded for the development of genetic techniques to produce future generations with higher levels of intelligence but with psychological properties of the sort that make for docile subjects of intense technical schooling and productive effort, in short, a race of super-slaves. One can imagine a high level of tension between such concerns for the col-

lective demands of a high-tech economy and the demands of individuals for genetic techniques allowing them to satisfy their individual procreative fantasies, a demand that already manifests itself in the work on techniques to pre-determine the sex of one's offspring, not to speak of demands to alter one's individual genetic makeup to satisfy this or that personal fantasy.

In another direction, I think we must expect work on the chemical codes of life, searching for ways to arrest and perhaps even reverse the natural aging process. Aside from the psychological problems that success in that area would bring—think of what it would mean to be Tiresias, even with a young body—the demographic and social consequences of such techniques would be staggering. If one of the causes of the world's demographic explosion was the control of communicable diseases, imagine what would occur if the process of aging toward death were arrested! Would we have to control population by stopping the production of children? Export the surplus to outer space as modern Europe exported its surplus to America? When the genetic engineers came out with their new models of intelligent beings, would the old models have the obligation to put themselves on the human junk heap and die? That may seem like an alarmist projection, but that is what, analogously, we are already doing in economic terms with unskilled laborers or wrong-skilled laborers whose training or retraining is not "cost-effective" and would, therefore slow down our race to conquer nature.

And if the old models don't want just to go off somewhere and die, will the new models arm themselves for a war to produce by force the now artificial evolutionary succession of species or sub-species of intelligent beings? That is what, analogously, we have already done in North America and others are still doing in Latin America where culturally, rather than genetically, obsolete hunter-gatherers have been and are being largely exterminated to make way for the new models.

I hope you will forgive my engaging in such depressing science-fiction. Even if not exactly those problems, then others not too different are likely to be thrust upon us in our lifetimes. Problems and questions of this sort are likely to come upon us in an increasing flood in the next century. America is surely to be at the center of the struggles such problems set off.

As things presently stand, I do not see any reason to be especially hopeful that either America or the first and second worlds as a whole will be any more successful in dealing with them than we have been with the questions of that sort that we have already had to face: modern scientific medicine, which tended to produce population explosions until countered by artificial contraception, which has, in turn, been followed by striking demograph-

ic declines in the first and second worlds where it is widely practiced, and medically easy abortion, which has contributed greatly to those same demographic declines in many countries and, at least, makes us uneasy at the possibility that we are accomplices in legalized murder. The great majority of Americans have long abandoned what was once a widespread moral rejection of contraception and they are shifting away on the matter of abortion because, I think, they have posed the question in the individualistic language of rights as the universe of discourse within which the matter is to be discussed.

In all such cases what is involved is the use of an artificial mechanical or chemical technique to interrupt the natural chain of events whereby another human life is produced, continues on its trajectory, or is ended. The interruption is produced because one or more persons wish some of those events to take place without the others. The way in which "natural" and "unnatural" was taken as a standard in moral thinking, and still is in much official Catholic moral teaching on such matters, was to think of each discrete natural chain (e.g., copulation, fertilization, maturation of the foetus, and birth) as normative. But at the center of the modern technological conception of reality is the **denial** that **any** particular causal chain is normative and that for two reasons: first, any causal chain can, in principle, be altered by human intervention and, second, since our scientific conception of nature excludes any idea of a perfect end state for the whole, our power to alter causal chains can only be directed by individual desire or value judgment. That is to state the matter objectively.

To state the matter subjectively: what drives our present civilizational project in its peculiar features is the lust for a liberating power that frees man from **every given, natural** causal chain. It is liberating in that it enables man to stop or redirect every natural sequence and thus to replace what had hitherto seemed to be natural, i.e. necessary and inevitable and, thus, supra-human, patterns of events by an infinity of other patterns that better suit our pleasure. My reason for focussing so much on the bio-genetic side of our technological revolution was to make clear that mankind itself, as a fixed biological species, becomes a target for this drive for liberating power. In this context, man, as individual and as social being and as a being reflexively shaped in part by an environment he himself increasingly produces, has as a defining nature only the paradoxical power to change nature, including his own nature. In this sense, his definition is his power to change his definition.

Analytically, one may distinguish two main forms in which that lust for liberating power over nature manifests itself. At the center of the process, power over and freedom from the limits of the natural order is most fully ex-

perienced by the scientifico-technical creators of the new cosmic artifice. The full experience of creative self-assertion is evidently limited to a relatively small number of researchers and technological entrepreneurs who participate directly in the production of wholly new processes and species. At the other pole, where mass participation in the process is possible even for those with no scientific or technical comprehension of the processes they command, there are the consumers of the mass-produced products of the technological revolution who use "wonder drugs," electronic, mechanical, and biological "miracles" by the dozen, talk to one another via signals bounced off man-made moons, have children by dead husbands, feel the beat of artificial hearts, excrete with the aid of artificial kidneys, after having consumed milk-shakes made without milk and frozen cheese pizzas made without cheese.

Obviously, many people fall somewhere in between. However, much of the struggle about modern forms of social organization, I mean about capitalism and socialism, can be understood in terms of the difference in emphasis given to one or the other of those sides of the lust for self-divinization through technological power.

All the societies derived from more or less orthodox Marxism focus on the fact that the technological processes whereby man becomes creator of the world out of natural chaos are collective processes and they tend to favor systematically human collective self-deification in the process of creating a world in the productive process. Capitalist socio-economic organization is also, of course, designed to structure collective production processes. Nevertheless, the teleological emphasis is not so much on the collective production of the new world as an end in itself but rather on the creation of an infinity of private worlds constituted by the choices of particular combinations of products and services to realize one's personal paradise, which choices shape the mix of the production process. Evidently, that simple picture needs to be made somewhat more complex given the fact that the makers and sellers of products can enhance their ability to construct each his own private paradise in the measure that he can manipulate the choices of others toward those products from which he profits.

At this level of analysis, the individualism of the capitalistic versions of the technological revolution is especially visible, as Marxists do not tire to point out. But, at a deeper level, those social organizations that emphasize the collective production rather than the private consumption side of the process are quite as individualistic although this is not often noted.

Given that the drive for technological power is the drive to free man from the order of natural patterns and allow him freely to substitute patterns of his own choosing, the

choice of the particular forms that the production process will take is a free choice or, rather, a free positing of one set of forms for the world rather than other: free and, thus, arbitrary. Those who, in socialist economies, control the productive process are those whose dreams of world-creating power are actualized. Something like that is true of the masters of capitalist firms but there is this difference: the capitalists are constrained by the need to flatter and serve the private worlds represented by the choices on the free consumer market. Those constraints are much less stringent on the state capitalists, i.e. the rulers of socialist societies. Moreover, private capitalists can sometimes be checked by the semi-independent power of the state to influence the rate of investment, the rate and distribution of consumption, and even the production or character of specific products.

Well then, I seem to have described a dead end. On the one hand, our modern experience of power to modify nature in seemingly limitless ways, including our own biological nature simply excludes the possibility of claiming sacred, divinely sanctioned rightness to the patterns and sequences of nature given before we knew our power. There is no going back to Egypt, no going back to the remnants of a cosmological form of civilization from which the children of the Hebrews fled under Moses. In Moses' time going back could be a serious temptation. Today it can only be a frivolous and romantic self-delusion, perfectly possible for isolated individuals and groups who **choose**, as ancient men and women could not choose, to live wholly within the rhythms of the given. Such a course is simply impossible for modern societies as a whole.

On the other hand, the far more dangerous temptation is to worship ourselves, more specifically our will to power, as the immanent and radically self-liberated creators of the world. Both Hobbes, the remote forefather of liberal capitalist society, and Marx, the father of socialist state capitalism, clearly understood their projects as forms of collective self-deification. Every aspect of human existence is to be reduced to or harnessed to the unlimited extension of human power. In each case the driving force is the illusion of a kind of Dionysiac frenzy of self-transcendence whereby one hopes to acquire the technological power to satisfy the deepest desire of one's individual or collective heart of hearts.

The illusion is that there is yet another level of perfect consumer satiation or of the glorious victory of socialist labor just around the corner and requiring just one more great struggle, either to liberate finally the divinely productive capacities of infinitely inventive avarice by "getting the government off our backs" or to liberate the collective rationality of the productive process by stamping out the last remnants of bourgeois individualism. In

either case, the illusion of a sacred, yes, divine achievement before which all other considerations pale is what justifies driving masses of people, whether with guns and police terrorism or with unemployment and bankruptcy proceedings and hunger to Siberia or the Sun Belt as, at earlier stages, we drove and were driven from the farms and cotton fields to the factories of Moscow and Detroit. That illusion justifies dumping on the human junk-piles of history those human beings whose forms of life are obsolete: kulaks, or unskilled labor, or primitive hunter-gatherers, as time and situation may have it.

The irony of our awesome technological power over nature is that we too are objects in nature. We are in the process of coming to a power to change nature to suit ourselves. But, that same power is a power to change ourselves to suit ourselves. But, what are we ourselves and what will suit ourselves, if we can change ourselves?

The question before us in the face of this situation in which we find ourselves is whether there is a middle way between the extremes of a romantic back-to-naturism and a mad rush to the shapeless hubris of unlimited technological self-assertion; we have already had to look at that problem in the external sphere of ecology where we have been frightened by the prospects of our power to create synthetic chemical substances that can poison all of us or by the prospects of nuclear accidents and nuclear war, but the problem is turning inward as our bio-genetic power grows. The question is whether there is a middle way both on the level of theoretical reflection on the experience of life as it is revealed in the light of our power to transform every natural sequence and on the level of the density of the individual and social practice of life.

Such a middle way, if we find one, would have had to abandon for good the old and comforting but false belief in an essentially fixed, changeless creation whose divinely established patterns have only to be endlessly repeated in order to attain contact with the divine source of "the eternal return," to use Eliade's term.

Such a middle way, if we find one, would also have had to abandon the powerfully intoxicating, demonic illusion of the decisive technological "breakthrough," to use a term current in the West, or of the revolutionary technological "*parousia*" to use a traditional theological term to refer to Marx's dynamic and technological version of religion as human self-projection. To put it that way is not really fair. The first question is whether such hopes are really illusory hopes? and why? I will not pretend to answer such questions. But I will venture some guesses on the directions that reflection might profitably take by way of a start.

I think we need to return to the origins of classical Greek philosophy and the ways in which it attempted to deal with the beginning breakdown of pagan, that is

intra-cosmic natural, religion. I don't mean to propose some simplistic return to ancient Greek philosophy as a sort of new dogma. But, I think we may still be able to learn something from the dialectic, Socratic and *ironic via negativa* that searched for a new ground of order in a cosmos whence the Olympian gods had fled. The Athenian fundamentalists and other know-nothings who charged Socrates with atheism were surely wrong but they weren't altogether off the track. Ancient philosophy was engaged in a search for a principle of order that transcended visible nature and its sequences, which had been the object of pagan religious awe and worship. Approached in this context, I suspect that Socratic irony still has something to teach us.

Ancient philosophy, which included the sorts of studies that we now call science, may also have this other interesting feature about the way in which it dealt with the technological consequences of scientific knowledge. It may well have consciously taken a path away from the technological exploitation of the considerable range of scientific discovery it had achieved. For example, the ancients knew perfectly well about steam power and actually built experimental devices to transform the thermal power of steam into mechanical power but seem to have scorned and/or feared the consequences for non-philosophic society of turning such devices to what Bacon called "the relief of man's estate."

Secondly, it seems to me that we need to reflect on and work out the ethical and technological implications of such limit perceptions as are represented by Godel's theorem. To what extent is it necessarily the case that every increase in clarification, precision, technical control in one respect is purchased at the price of obscurity, imprecision, loss of control in another just because the character of our scientific noetic processes is, ironically, not that of holistic but rather of inevitably partial knowledge? Such reflection naturally leads to a more

general consideration of limitedness; on the ethical level that would translate into a reconsideration of the truth of Greek philosophic irony and of the literature of tragedy, essentially matters of limitedness. This is, it seems to me, especially important for those of us who are Christians and who may too easily tend to overlook the truths of philosophic irony and of the literature of tragedy because of faith in an ultimate divine comedy consisting in an order that transcends the worlds of both nature and artifice and that includes divine forgiveness and love.

Positively, it seems to me, we need to ask what a defensible conception of holistic thought might look like given that it can not be identified with any simply static conception of the great chain of being. Given that the universe does not seem to be such a static chain of being, a conception which gave ontological plausibility to certain kinds of natural law ethics for example, the question is whether there is another and better mode of holistic thinking capable of ethically and aesthetically guiding and forming our technological powers now aimlessly and formlessly growing like some sort of societal cancer.

Theologically, that will require a deep re-articulation of the meaning of the passages in *Genesis* in which Adam and Eve are given precedence and dominion over other creatures, grants that, strangely, are both easily interpreted in terms of our present sense of power and that have often enough been used as justifications of a kind of limitless right to exploitation for the satisfaction of any human desire, however trivial, so that man becomes the bully of the world. Theologically, the question for us now, with all of our exploding technological power, is what can it mean to use that power as would a being made in the image of God? I think that, after Auschwitz, Gulag, and Hiroshima, we may have an inkling of our ability to act in ways that suggest something other than the image of God.

Through Phantasia to Philosophy

Review with Reminiscences

Eva Brann

I

The Unending Story by Michael Ende is both literally and in several other ways the most wonderful book I've read in ages. I think it will be easily received into the canon—hitherto almost exclusively English—of great "children's literature" along with the likes of *Wind in the Willows* and the *Alices*. (*Die Unendliche Geschichte*, Thienemanns Verlag, Stuttgart 1979. In English: *The Neverending Story*, Doubleday 1983, illustrated; G.K. Hall 1984, large print; Penguin 1984, paperback.)

But first a puzzlement, expressed in the raised eyebrow quotes above. What exactly makes "children's literature" children's literature?

Criteria close at hand are: who it is *for* or *by* or *about* (and assorted other prepositionally expressible relations). Perhaps, first of all, children's books are those *written for* children. However, one famous such book (I forget which) is dedicated to "children of all ages," which rather ruins the category. What is more, at least one pair of very famous ostensible children's books, the *Alice* books, is notoriously detested in childhood by the same people who later love them as children's books, myself included. For one thing, I despised the simp of an author who seemed seriously to believe that sweet (albeit perky) innocence was an essential attribute of little girls when I, an expert, knew that they constitute a considerable part

of society's criminal element. And for another, I was repelled by what I could sense, though not pinpoint, as a hidden agenda. For the *Alice* books, being among other things *romans à clef*, require a key, and an unpossessed key is just alienating, in distinction from unplumbable depths, which feel mysteriously homey. Furthermore, whomever they might be written for, children's books are, willy-nilly, largely *read by* co-opted adults who would surely go crazy reading them to children if they didn't develop their own sneaking attachment to them, as they certainly do. Just try shouting "Dr. Seuss" in the right adult company and back will come a chorus: "I do not like green eggs and ham! I do not like them, Sam-I-am." (Incidentally, I've often wondered in how many children "Dr. Seuss," by one of those homonymic misassociations that enrich infantile imaginative life, fosters friendly feelings toward the Greek "father of gods and men.")

Nor are children's tales exclusively *written by* adults. Besides the endless oral fabrications with which children regale their peers (or at least used to), they also occasionally indite quite fancy and elaborate stories. By and large these productions are a lost corpus, of course, but there are Austen and Brontë juvenalia, C.S. Lewis in *Surprised by Joy* records in some detail the modes and motifs of his childhood works, and I can even cite one extant, purportedly genuine, child-written classic: Daisy Ashford's nine-year-old summary judgment of the Victorian world, *The Young Visitors* ("To tell you the truth my Lord," says her socially shaky hero, Mr. Salteena, "I am not anyone of import and I am not a gentleman as they say he ended getting very red and hot.")

No more is *being about* children a sufficient test, since, although, as far as I know, children's books always have

Eva Brann is a tutor at St. John's college, Annapolis. The central importance of stories to human life was a constant theme of Bill O'Grady's thinking. Both the form and the content of this article would have made him glad.

some children as heroes or assistant heroes, so do some eminently adult books, for instance the pitiful and spooky brother and sister pair which is in unholy cahoots with a corrupt ghost in James' *Turn of the Screw*, and the juvenile perpetrators of all manner of un-innocent mischief in a good many Saki stories.

Nor are there topics and tones which are peculiarly suitable or unsuitable for children. Take supposed children's modes like fantasy, fairy tales and magic, and there will be plenty of authors who can do that for grown-ups (somewhat heavy on the Irish, to be sure). W.B. Yeats, W.H. Hudson, H. Rider Haggard, James Stephens, George MacDonald, C.S. Lewis, Walter de la Mare, Charles Williams, J.R.R. Tolkien come helter-skelter to mind. Take, on the other hand, a topic to which it might be thought to be hard to recruit children: political philosophy, and I can name a children's book which I recognize in retrospect as a childhood propaedeutic to the study of Plato's *Republic*; it is Hugh Lofting's *Voyages of Doctor Dolittle* in which the island Indians of Popsipetel force the Doctor to become their king, acclaiming Doctor John Dolittle as King Jong Thinkalot. "As for the poor Doctor, I never saw him so upset by anything. It was, in fact, the only time I have known him to get thoroughly fussed," says Stubbins, the Doctor's ten-year-old assistant and companion (compare *Republic* 347 and 520). In the morning the unwilling, but duty-bound philosopher king dispenses justice and in the afternoon he teaches school. "I have often thought," Stubbins observes, "that Popsipetel under the reign of Jong Thinkalot was perhaps the best-ruled state in the history of the world." If asked nicely I might produce an article on the parallelism between the Popsipetelian and the Platonic paradigms, plus a comparison of Socrates and the Doctor.

The one tone which was thought, at least until recently, to be entirely taboo in children's books, because children both *shouldn't* and *couldn't* be made to respond to it, was that of erotic passion. Now, Freud aside, the latter is surely false: In high-strung times especially, children are quite capable of sudden accesses of full-blown desire. Such an episode is described in Thomas Mann's Depression story, "Disorder and Early Sorrow," to the uncanny accuracy of which I can bear personal witness.

As for the sense that children shouldn't be subjected to explicitly erotic descriptions, some adults think that *they* shouldn't be either. On the other hand there are plenty of children's books that have a strong undertow of implicit passion, and quintessential passion too, the kind that possesses and tyrannizes and even destroys—such, for example, as surfaces in the self-surrender of the lovable little clairvoyant boy, Charles Wallace, to the seduction of "It" in Madeleine L'Engle's *A Wrinkle in Time*.

Nor does security and gentleness, in the manner of Mister Rogers' relaxation exercises, universally obtain in children's books. The Hauff fairy tales, which generations of German children grew up on, were smug and cruel at once with a kind of philistine sadism, and the children's poem which was the gaudium of the nursery, Wilhelm Busch's "Max and Moritz," ended with the two bad boys being ground through the flour mill, their particles promptly forming two loaves shaped in the images of those holy terrors. This literature may have something to answer for, but that's very much an undecided question in child psychology. Still, I do know that a modicum of suffering is the spice of a tale and that when I was little I always specified to my father that my goodnight story should be "very sad," by which, I understand in retrospect, I meant that it should be as excruciating as possible right up to "and they lived happily ever after." (German tales end, incidentally, with "and if they haven't died before then on this day they're living"—not exactly sweetness and light either.) These unholy joys were encouraged in later childhood, in latency as they used to say, by the wildly popular adventure novels of Karl May, fat, satisfying green and gold tomes of Indian adventure, homoerotic sadism and missionary zeal. (The latter by-passed me, but completely, in my German-Jewish childhood—the white scout's noble Indian intimate Winnetou—mine too, for a year or so—converts on his death bed, and I never knew it until a recent re-reading: Karl May is now available in this country in translation.) And then came comic books, the American outlet for these tastes—two years of alternating greed and surfeit which started in my third week or so in this country behind a vent on the roof of the YMHA of Boro Park, Brooklyn. Consequently the first English word whose meaning I ever consciously sought and savored was "sinister."

Comic books are, of course, read by adults as much as by children, with naive absorption as by soldiers stranded in barracks and with nostalgic sophistication as by student connoisseurs in dorms. There are even upper class imported comics, the *Tintin* series. In fact the earliest comics I know of, proto-comics really, the running caricatures of the aforementioned Wilhelm Busch (Victorian, in English periodization), are really meant for adults. The point this is ambling towards is that being in pictures isn't confined to children's books either—though I've never seen adult picture books as telling and discovery-rife as, say, Mitsumasa Anno's *Anno's Journey*.

Finally, trying to find some ideal characteristic of children's literature, Clifton Fadiman ("The Child as Reader," *Great Books Today*, 1983) comes up with this: It supplies children with a sense of freedom enjoyed in security. True enough, but so does adult escape litera-

ture. And, come to think of it, what novel-reading isn't escape—from the mundane to an enhanced world?

The long and the short of it seems to be that no set of criteria infallibly picks out "children's literature." One is thrown back on a purely extrinsic determination—who it's *meant* for—and that's easily subverted. Let but a well-disposed grown-up read a good children's book and—presto!—it's adult literature, wrong addressee notwithstanding.

But that leads to a much deeper and trickier question: Do children *read their books differently* from the way an adult reads them? It doesn't take much logical acumen to see that the answer is going to be bedeviled by a Cretan Liar type paradox: Those who argue for the otherness of childhood can't claim to have much inside knowledge. That ought to be a stumbling block both to "child's world" romantics and to epistemological geneticists. For suppose that children's cognitive abilities do develop in stages that can neither be anticipated nor reversed, then each new stage effects a radical transformation in consciousness, which the fully developed adult (as exemplified in the experimenting scientist himself) can perhaps conceptually reconstruct but never empathetically recover. (As it happens, it does turn out that certain Piagetan experiments, when replicated under somewhat more empathetic conditions, come up showing children to have more cognitive capability at an earlier time than the geneticist staging predicts. In fact, I keep wondering if a case couldn't be made for Piaget having shown that children are just natural Aristotelians: They apprehend motion as prior to time, they consider movements to be governed by their goals, they conceive place rather than coordinate space, and, in short, their cognitive ontology recapitulates the historical phylogeny of physics—a shift in perspective rather than in capability.)

One fall-out from the strict developmental view of children is the notion of "reading readiness." And yet unready reading provides the windfall joys of a child's life. I recall getting into one of my father's medical reference books (*streng verboten!*), section: tropical diseases, and thrilling to the illicit attractions, depicted in glorious technicolor, of some burgeoning cases of elephantiasis. And that was quite a while before I was ready to decipher the text. (I was slow to learn to read, probably because I spent the first grade, God knows why, at Volksschule No. 4, homeroom teacher Fraeulein Pfefferkorn, a young functionary of the BDM, the Nazi girls' league, and our primer was all about an avuncular Fuehrer and a certain little brown Heinz who got to give him a pretty posy at a parade.)

On some Sunday mornings, ready or not, my father would break open a huge volume of the encyclopedia (*Der Grosse Brockhaus*) and read to me. My preferred course

was to set out from the coolly scientific heading "Vulkan," tracking references to doom-preparing "Vesuv," landing finally in panicky "Pompeii," where a black cloud of sulphur fumes and pumice hail is preparing *the* great romance of archaeology. Incidentally, when a decade or so later I discovered Bulwer-Lytton's classical-kitsch classic *The Last Days of Pompeii*, it was sheer reminiscent magic, including a persistent illusion that that slender-columned Campanian villa idyll came to an end on a Sunday morning in a villa in Berlin-Dahlem. (Actually I have no idea what day of the week dawned, a silent blue scorcher—the birds had ceased to sing—on August 4, 79 A.D. The Berlin villa, having been legally stolen by an SS family, was destroyed in an Allied air raid probably as late as 1944.) Seven years more, and I was a declared classical archaeologist (though Greek rather than Roman, my taste having grown very pure in the meanwhile). Which goes to show how long-lived and far-working are such out-of-turn childhood experiences. And it isn't only grownup wonders that children take to; perfectly mundane texts will also serve. I recall that just after I learned to read I acquired an avidity for the "Directions for Use" on boxes, bottles and cans. That taste too has stuck: I have a little collection of direction delights, among them the instruction booklet from an abacus (1947), touted as "the pet calculator of Japan," "Which Brings Comfort and Convenience on Your Life."

The relation of childhood to adult reading has of course got a history. Louis XIII of France was born in 1601. As a little boy the Dauphin was told goodnight stories, for instance of Melusine, the tutelary fair of the house of Lusignan, who turned into a half-serpent on Saturdays. Just the same tale was told among adults at evening gatherings (Philippe Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood*). In the course of the seventeenth century, adults turned increasingly to more sophisticated entertainments: "children's stories" are originally abandoned adult tales. Generalizing wildly, I have an inkling that modern views on the distinctiveness of childhood have less to do with "the discovery of the child" than with the construction of new ideas of maturity—and of adult diversion, for instance that it fails to divert unless it reveals the true existential horror at the heart of things.

One test for continuity of consciousness is to read to yourself a book that was read to you when you were very little. I have tried it. There is a German nursery book, still in print and going strong in Germany, called *Little Peter's Moon Trip*. It concerns a cowardly cockchafer (of the melodious species *Melolontha melolontha*, I've lately learned) whose hereditarily missing sixth leg must be recovered from the brute of a man-in-the-moon who keeps it hanging from a nail driven into a birch branch (broken from the birch in our garden, which I loved equal-

ly for its waving white and green grace and because it offered illicit bark-pulling, the most satisfying dismemberment there is). It has been over half a century, but the very cover wafted me back into that bourgeois nursery midsummer night's dream (actually May, cockchafer time), with its character-crowded cosmos, its heavenly highway for secret excursions. But it also came back to me that at four I had been half-repelled by the book, and now I know explicitly what I then knew implicitly, namely why: only unexceptionably good children were candidates for the moon mission, there was lots of piety in the sky, and all the goodies were blond—which left me out on all counts; besides the pictures were too broadstroked—you couldn't walk into them and discover details, and there was no wit at all.

On the other hand, Doctor Dolittle, who came into my life at about six, had from the first and still has my wholehearted allegiance, because I sensed then what I recognize now: that the books are an introduction to human excellence. It was to my moral advantage, I think, that for several years I *was* Tommy Stubbins and the Doctor was my own father got up in cutaway and top hat: the kindly physician who can't remember to collect his bills but can call on all the animals for help in their own language, the unfussed explorer who simply sails out of Puddleby-on-the-Marsh on a borrowed boat, who in a shipwreck secures first Stubbins but right after his beloved notebooks, the muddling master of the jury-rig who, in the words of the parrot Polynesia, the senior animal in his menagerie, always "gets there," the comfortable homey round gentleman whose rare righteous wrath shakes the earth, the world's most learned naturalist who never stands on his dignity and never loses it—a just and a wise, and in the opinion of his intimates (and in mine), a great man.

Antipathies and allegiances that survive so long unchanged surely do betoken a continuity of consciousness. In fact, judging from personal experience, the only stage to which childhood is really alien is adolescence. Quasi-adulthood is a time of such hot subjectivity, such excessively large and excessively particular passions that it devalues just those objective delights adults and children have in common.

Children's writers (except for a few who don't write but construct their books to satisfy a market, or what is worse, a theory) naturally work on the same-world hypothesis; indeed the highest praise they can hope for is that which Hugh Walpole gives the author of *Doctor Dolittle*: "Mr. Lofting believes in his story quite as much as he expects us to." If they do preach or pull their punches or wax sentimental it is because they have for a moment lost that inward mirror-vision by which a grown-up sees the child within observing the grown-up

without. Meanwhile, just by condescending, they acknowledge at least the commensurability of the worlds of children and adults.

The matter is worth dwelling on because it looks like a peculiarly accessible case of a set of problems, or rather of related impossibilities, that preoccupy contemporary philosophers: the impossibility of radical translation, translation utterly from scratch, of our language into another, the impossibility of entering empathetically into an alien or ancient culture, the impossibility of recovering the terms of a theoretical frame of reference after it has undergone a shift—and ultimately, the opacity of individual human beings to each other.

The relation of child to adult might seem to epitomize all four "incommensurabilities." But there is the mitigating circumstance that while none of us can, in principle, have been members of a tribe that said "gavagai" while looking where we see a rabbit, or have seen the planets revolve about us as a Ptolemaic geocentrist, or have lived as "archaic" Greeks (situations considered by authors like Quine, Kuhn and Feyerabend), some of us, at least *have* been children. I for one would, to be sure, wish to claim something more: When I was little I said "Hase" where I now say "rabbit" and I feel somehow confident that then and now I mean the same by both vocables: some such creature as the immortal Hazel of *Watership Down*. Somewhat later I spent four years studying intensely enough to see dance in my dreams just those pots and pans on which said "archaic" Greeks depicted themselves in looming black shadows and which archeologists call "Geometric": and though they never lost their mystery for me (and I certainly couldn't do with the bizarre conceptual analyses so thoughtfully provided by proponents of the radical difference of the archaic mind) the satisfying way in which the glossy brown-black line ornament lay on the pot and the simple telling grandeur of the funeral scenes got to me. I knew that those pot-painters knew what they were doing and that, but for the least substantial of obstacles, the twenty-eight hundred or so years between us, I would know it too. Minimally, at the time those Attic silhouettes felt closer than the non-objects of contemporary painting. And finally, living, like the rest of us, in a manifestly ptolemaic world, ignorant of all astronomy, and happening to study Ptolemy's *Almagest* some time before Copernicus' *Revolutions*, I couldn't help but see the world ptolemaically, or so I thought. Or, looking at it from the flip side, why dwell on the inaccessibility of former centuries and other cultures when one's own time can be completely uncanny and one's intimates can be as the aliens from outer space?

But even suppose that my sense of secular solidarity is mere self-delusion, there is still that one case of crossing into another world which is not hopeless. I was never

a Greek (I guess), but I, my personally identical I, was once, extensively and devotedly, a child, and it seems to me that in figuring out how one's childhood frame of mind is recovered one might also learn how other places and other times become accessible. Do we have a faculty for this project?

Of course we do: memory for the recovery of our former self and imagination for entering into other worlds. These faculties (parenthetically: faculty psychology is back, see Jerry Fodor, *Modularity of Mind*) display a certain persistence and a certain evanescence, having to do, I suppose, with the character of their objects, which are not presentations but re-presentations, that is, not solid things that are there, but the see-through shades of their absent selves.

Now what I want to say about the road to recovery naturally concerns only full-blown childhood and doesn't reach into pre-linguistic babyhood. (Memory of and in infancy is a particularly fascinating but difficult chapter in cognitive developmental psychology.) Furthermore, since I'm thinking not about the daily coping of childhood but about its imaginative life, especially with respect to books, I'm not talking of adult memories of childhood existence, but rather of that remembrance of things past which is essentially *memory of memories*. What I mean is that as soon as a new book has been taken in it becomes part of the imaginative memory, there to begin its episodic afterlife, perhaps in the case of a goodnight story even in that very night's dream. (Incidentally, this kind of remembrance is pretty recalcitrant to investigation—glory be!—and for all the enormous amount of work done on memory recently, I haven't found much on it.)

In remembering one does, to be sure, sometimes come on oneself reading. (A vivid memory: reading my first self-read book, *Robinson Crusoe*—recommended to the parents of Europe, as I later delightedly discovered, as the one and only book fit to be a child's first by Rousseau himself in *Emile*. While securing my island in imagination, I simultaneously worked away at poking a hole in the plaster wall of the nursery, intended in time to be an escape route from the enforced after-mid-day-dinner rest hour. Hole discovered on brother's information. Scene and plaster job. Tremendous revenge on little beast.) But mostly the images we remember were already memory-images in childhood—and therein lies the recovery: we return *through* the imagination *to* the imagination, a hermetically sealed, secure depository.

Not really, someone might argue. Over time and growth the kaleidoscope of the mind has shifted out of all recognition and its image bits have entered new and transforming contexts. Well, I want to propose a figure which illustrates at least how it *feels* to live in both worlds.

In 1832, Necker, a student of perception, drew atten-

tion to a phenomenon which is now all over the literature. "Necker's Cube" is simply a perspective outline drawing of a solid. When observed, it flips, willy-nilly so that the front corner is suddenly, without transition, in back. It is impossible to see both positions at once, nearly impossible to fixate one position for long, very hard for those used to perspective drawing to see it as a flat picture. The so-called "perceptual paradox" associated with the figure is just this: that we cannot help seeing reversing cubes when the single stimulus itself is in fact a plane design.

The "interpretative paradox" is analogous. There is a common "flat" stimulus, the text itself, taken as mere material for make-believe. Children are, of course, fully aware that they can, with an effort, deflate the book, that there is a safety exit into plane prose. (I remember being at a play about an enchanted forest with Tony, a friend of mine, then four, who at the eeriest part whispered to me apotropaically: "You know, it isn't real.") But the spontaneous position is to read the text perspectively, as a world with depth. And in that reading different corners come to the fore, unbidden and irrepressible, corresponding to the preoccupations of then and of now. Imagination-memory, I would say, is the capability for perspectival reversals, and so the faith is: unless the road is blocked by trauma, childhood is accessible, as are all other human terrains.*

II

That faith is reinforced by *The Neverending Story*, the Baedeker into imagination-land, the imperial realm of Phantasia (no, repeat, no, relation to the Disney extravaganza), which is certainly a children's book by all available criteria, and a hugely popular one. There has, it appears, even been a movie.

To begin with, Ende's *Neverending Story*, subtitled "from A to Z," is beautifully made. (Incidentally, it abounds in puns like that on Ende's name, repeated from his other wonderful book, *Momo*, and in paradoxes like the one expressed in the subtitle, providing young and old with the joys of catching on.) Each page is headed by a nice garland; each chapter begins with a full page illumination of its proper letter (by Roswitha Quadflieg). Best of all, the book is printed in two colors. For this is

*The day after I finished this *jeu d'esprit* I came on a multiply serendipitous reference—Clifford Geertz in "Found in Translation: On the Social History of the Moral Imagination," citing Lionel Trilling, who in his last essay (on the ever-piquant theme of reading Jane Austen with American students) calls this "one of the significant mysteries of man's life in culture: how it is that other people's creations can be so utterly their own and so deeply part of us."

a tale of a passage into Phantasia, first reluctant and reversible and then deep to the point of no return. The print is red for the waking and working world (*Mundus mundanus* in my private cosmography) for Stop! Danger! Wake up!, I suppose, and it turns spring-green for Phantasia. Green-skinned too, is the slim, severe, noble lad Atreju of the Indian tribe of the Purple Buffalo, Bastian's Phantasian friend and finally his savior. Bastian Balthasar Bux, the "hero of passage," is a fat, serious and lonely little boy, gourmet of apple strudel and spinner of tales, flabby in body and sturdy in soul.

For content, this is a *big* substantial book containing myriads of characters and sub-worlds. For Phantasia is both infinite and highly anisotropic; in each of its places dwells a different kind of being. What is more, Phantasia abounds in stories to be: "But that's a story for another time" is the neverending refrain, just as the book really starts when it seems to be ending. Here's its skeleton:

On a mundane morning, Bastian, running from his tormentors, finds himself on the inside of a glass door saying "Antiquariat" in mirror-writing. He feels compelled to steal a book bound in shimmering copper colored silk, entitled, of course, *The Neverending Story*, and bearing the sign of two snakes biting each other's tails (recognizable by aficionados of the hermetic as the double *ouroboros*, the symbol of cyclical endlessness). With it he hides in the storage attic of his school where he makes camp and begins to read. The print turns green. He is looking into Phantasia, a threatened land. Its child empress is sick and her sickness is reflected in Phantasia's progressive piecemeal annihilation. There is only one cure: a human being must enter Phantasia and give the Infanta her new name. As the school-tower clock strikes the afternoon hours it comes to Bastian that *he* knows the name, that *he* is chosen to save Phantasia—and not only Phantasia but also the real world, because in proportion as the former is swallowed by non-being, the latter is possessed by lies; their salvation is conjoined.

At two o'clock he slips out to pee and eats his lunch apple; at eleven he glimpses a monkish ancient in Phantasia who is writing the copper colored book Bastian is reading. Just before midnight he realizes that both realms will be caught in a treadmill of eternal return unless he acts. At the stroke of twelve he is in Phantasia, in the Night Wood of Perelin, and the print turns green until the end when Bastian tells his father the whole story—except for once, when he prominently strews his initials BBB in red sand over the Painted Desert Goab. It is the first clue of his coming corruption. Now, having grown beautiful in body, celebrated as the savior, he conducts a triumphal progress through the realm. He is wearing the amulet Aurnyn, the golden, the Glow. It bears the *ouroboros* on the obverse and on the reverse the legend

"Do as you will." Bastian misunderstands it as license to "Do as you wish," wherewith his desires become indefinite and destructive—the classical outline of a tyrant. As he goes, he falls deeper and deeper into self-forgetfulness.

On the way, there are many wonderful characters and episodes. There is for example Atreju's conveyance and companion, Fuchur, the Dragon of Gladness (*Gluecksdrache*) who floats and swoops through the air in joyous bows (just like my dragon kite), and has a voice like a bell. (Hermann Hesse has a little essay—1949—on the golden sonority of the vocable *Glueck*.) The episode closest to my heart comes late in the book at the nadir of Bastian's amnesia: his days with Yore the miner, who has charge of the "pit of pictures" and the "lode of dreams," where are deposited transparencies, tablets thin as a breath: our memories and dreams, for "a dream cannot come to nothing once it is dreamt." Bastian must search these image-archives for a familiar dream as a clue to guide him out of his oblivion. After several days of forlorn sorting, he finds a dream tablet of a man in a lab coat holding up the impression of a denture, which fills him with enormous longing. This is the beginning of his ascent and return to his father (who is in fact a dentist).

The Neverending Story is full of delights which an alert child may sense and an adult connoisseur may decipher. It is a real work of literature, meaning that it maintains far-flung connections with its kind, being full of allusions, borrowings, references: like Carroll's Alice, Bastian goes through the looking glass, like MacDonald's Phantastes, he finds the road to fairy-land, like Rabelais' Thelemites, he does as he will. And right in the middle of the book traces turn up of one previous Phantasia-traveler who made the song Bastian's knights sing all the time. Translated from German, it goes:

When that I was and a tiny little boy
With hey, ho, the wind and the rain...

They recall his name as "Shexpir or the like." Evidently one adult who made it.

III

There is an age-old philosophical perplexity, the dream-wake confusion, propounded for instance by the Chinese sage Chuang-tzu on apparently awakening from a dream: "Who am I then? A butterfly dreaming that it is Chuang-tzu or Chuang-tzu dreaming that I am a butterfly?" (3rd century, B.C.), again by Descartes in the *Meditations* (17th century A.D.) and lately in *The Bear That Wasn't* (reviewed in Gareth Matthews' charming book *Philosophy and the Young Child*). Young children are, of course, very much alive to just such linguistic and philosophical puzzles. Parental anecdotes about their midget metaphysicians

abound, always delightful, an occasional sense of oracular self-mystification notwithstanding. So out of the blue the aforementioned Tony said of God (who was not exactly the talk of his family): "He is so big, sooo big he's an idea"—Anselm-in-embryo! Indeed there is more to it than pleasure in puzzles. Not for nothing do we enter upon rational life enthralled to negativity, *the* metaphysical problem. I mean the "terrible twos", a condition whose essence a lovable little boy Peter whom I used to sit for (or rather, on) would express in the remarkable phrase he prefixed to his continual stream of objections: "Want not to want. . ." Negativity first, and later existential panic: I recall awakening every night for some weeks to watch the darkly heaving ramification of the well-loved walnut outside the nursery window and to know that my mother could die.

Yet later, at seven or eight, my father succeeded in inducing in me the first *conscious* moment of philosophical wonder I can recall. He was taking a *privatissimum* on the first *Critique* with his friend Arthur Liebert, then the President of the *Kantgesellschaft*. On a Sunday morning walk through the spring woods he showed me that my hands were bewitched, that, though like as two peas in a pod, I couldn't bring them into congruence. A quarter century later, when I discovered his source in para. 13 of the *Prolegomena*, Kant's illustration of his claim that space is not a property of the things themselves but the form of their outer intuition, all the original amazement came back to me, and henceforth the pure material of the outer form of sensibility was permanently dyed spring-green.

All these approaches to philosophy—and, really, they're not peculiar to children—occur in *The Neverending Story*: playful puzzles, deep fear, serious questions. But literally the most wonderful mode is the predominant one: Here is a *philosophical story book*, a book of speculative myths, a working vacation for the imagination.

The grandest philosophic myths, those Socrates tells in the Platonic dialogues, are *end-myths*; they consummate the dialectical argument with the high of a cosmic vision. Now, in contemporary philosophy, grandeur being out of favor, mini-myths, flairless, little *thought-constructs*, are placed throughout the logical argument: Martians, counter-earthlings, brains-in-a-vat and possible worlds inhabited by that one-and-only unicorn whose affliction is non-existence. Finally, there are the real myths, the ones that are not made but re-told, and these are good as *preludes* to philosophy: In the *Metaphysics* (A) Aristotle says: "Wonder is the beginning of philosophy," "myths are composed of wonders," and so "the myth lover (*philomythos*) is somehow a philosopher (*philosophos*)."

But he also says that wonder is really a sense of one's ignorance and that one takes to philosophy as "an escape from ignorance." And so he announces a slow-

starting but irresistible development: the way of science is the way away from wonder. Two millennia later, a founding text in natural philosophy will bear the still wondering legend "Wonder and is no Wonder" about its central diagram (the endless chain around the prism, Stevin 1605); four centuries later it will be near-universal dogma that science and philosophy mean *demythification*. The myth-lover is meant to come to maturity; much of our education is devised to sober us up.

Yet there is also a sense, endlessly analyzed and be-moaned (and not only by those soft spirits who want to reimmerse themselves in magical murk), that something has been lost, that the world we hoped to gain by taking our two-and-a-half-thousand year temperance pledge has somehow lost its shape and color. What is it that myths did for the world?

They made it visible, I imagine, by—ugly but apt term—*potentiating* the appearances, that is to say, by making them significant. The Necker cube shows that even the objects of mere perception depend on interpretative preconceptions to take shape. Myths might be thought of as analogous interpretative schemata for the human shaping of phenomena. They bring out in appearances just that depth and color from which measuring science and rational philosophy soberly abstract; hence they give them *visibility*—a word used here certainly in an extended, perhaps in a private sense: I call appearing objects "visible" when I do not look *past* them as being mere unsuggestive particulars, or *through* them as being mere representative instances, but *at* them as recalling through their very looks *both* themselves *and* something beyond. (This mode of significant appearing is usually called "symbolic," but it shouldn't be, since by long-standing usage a symbol mainly "stands for" something *else*.)

Genuine myths, the sort that are not composed and read but received and reenacted, are mostly extinct, and the notion of reviving them through deliberate acts of creation is a practical contradiction in terms. Yet all is not lost. A grand enough fairy tale can stand in for those by-gone world-frames. (So, come to think of it, can a great grown-up novel.) Such stories make something of the mundane world; they back it with a vibrant ground and bring it out with vivid contrasts.

Ende's books, both *Momo* and *The Neverending Story*, do even more: They reflect on what they are doing while they are doing it—a feature they share with the finest speculative works. They tell wonderful tales and wonder about tale-telling. They represent the annihilation of the imaginative realm as *the* great emergency of contemporary life, and even as they tell the story of its peril they accomplish its restoration. Ende's mythophilia is a beginning of philosophy which is not just to be left behind.

Nil admirari advises the Roman poet, follower of a latter-

day philosophy; he means both "Wonder at nothing" and "Think nothing wonderful." *Omnia admirari*, "Wonder at everything and find everything wonderful" must be the Phantasia-traveller's postulate. Its requirements determine both the kind and the mode of the thinking which begins in Phantasia. For first, certain questions can take on flesh and flourish there unashamedly which are skeletons in the logical closet. And second, the Phantastic mode of imagining is an unabashed reversal of the (pretended) order of rational investigation: Here the questions are candidly reached through the answers, since the imagination, for all its tolerance of the antic and the monstrous, is constitutionally partial to certain kinds of doing and being and inimical to others.

I'll come to an end with a small sampling of the neverending stream of questions which wells up in Phantasia.

Phantasia, the realm of the imagination, subsists independently of human attention—and yet its existence depends on a periodic human invocation, a timely Adamic re-naming. Bastian says: "I would like to know, just what is going on in a book when it is closed?" And his discoveries speak to and, of course, contradict current solutions to long-debated problems such as: What is the nature of fictional, or possible, worlds? What is the standing of non-existent objects? How do they comport with "reality"?

Phantasia's topography is infinite and yet centered. It has, as Bastian learns, a perilous port of entry (Perelin, the Night Wood) and a magical place of exit. He enters each of its places as a separate world and yet he progresses through the land of phantasy as through *one* empire. The lay-out of fictional worlds (their boundaries and compatibility) is treated—with severely averted eyes—in

the logic of fiction ("deviant" logic, so-called!). Its doctrines, particularly concerning the question "Are all fictional worlds connected?" deny Bastian's experience of the cohesion of all stories.

Phantasia is the realm into which nothingness first erupts; that is what Bastian is called on to deal with, and he learns that escape from the treadmill of mere recurrence, the revivification of a sad daily existence, and truth telling itself depend on saving this realm of the imagination—a powerful though deviant answer to the question, endlessly revolved in contemporary philosophy, "What is the crisis of modernity?"

Phantasia can engulf and corrupt, too. As his sojourn loses its aim, as he forgets his daily shape and his human mission and tyrannizes the realm he has saved, it becomes a thicket of sophisticated un-meaning; here apes play aleatic compositional games, which when continued for all eternity will produce all stories and all stories of stories including the Neverending Story. Even Bastian in his pride is appalled at the insult this extreme of esthetic formalism offers his copper-colored book; he becomes a partisan in the great question of esthetics: "Does art have meaning over and above its form?"

And finally, as the Neverending Story ends, Bastian, emerged from Phantasia, tells his father the story of his reading of the story of his journey into the realm where the story of his journey is being written. He would like to know, Bastian says, "How could this book occur within itself?" He has found the fairy-form of a cluster of questions that are the fascination of present-day intellectual life: recursion and self-reference.

Enough said. The point's been made: One way, a wonderful way, to philosophy passes through Phantasia.

A Toast to the Republic

Curtis Wilson

The custom of giving this toast at the President's dinner is a rather old one, having been initiated in the early years of the New Program by Scott Buchanan, and continued without interruption down to this time. My task is to try to say what it means.

St. John's is a rather unusual place, and one of its peculiarities is its peculiar mixture of traditionalism and questioning—questioning that can become radical. When I first came, I was shocked by many of the questions, especially those of the *Ti esti?* variety. In the second seminar I attended here, the opening question was, What is a hero? During the course of the seminar, the leader who first posed the question, repeated it, in measured tones, in truly Aeschylean style, no less than three times. It was not a question I knew what to do with; it was not one I had hoped to hear. I really had no use for heroes. In the several uncomfortable silences, the only thing I could think of was that line in Bertolt Brecht's play, *Galileo*: it is a sad time, Galileo says, when a country needs heroes. The Brecht line has long ago lost its charm for me. The staggering question that Winfree Smith asked remains. And in general, the most important questions for me have become—not those which admit of systematic reply, though I am very fond of working out anything algebraic and easy—but those which arrest the mind in the presence of the awesome, the beautiful, or the utterly mysterious. And so I am grateful to colleagues who ask

unanswerable questions, and insist on our stretching our thought toward the height and depth of them. Underlying the toast I must give tonight is such a question.

What do we mean by *the* republic? It has to be *the* republic, not this one or that one. Robert Bart first explained that to me. The Latin term *res publica* means *that* which is public, the public thing. Early on, it was used to refer to the contents of the public treasury, the common *wealth* in the most literal sense. Later on, its meaning was extended so as to include the whole body of institutions and traditions and knowledges by which the lives of the citizens were shaped, and on which they depended in order to have a realm of freedom and action.

The corresponding Greek term was *politeia*. Cicero used *res publica* to translate the term *politeia*, the title of a dialogue by Plato. *Politeia* meant originally citizen life, the life of the free citizen. The life of the citizen within the *polis* was always sharply contrasted with everything private—with everything having to do with family or kinship or household, everything having to do with the necessities of survival, with food-getting and child-bearing. *Politeia* was a realm of speech and freedom and action. It was a higher realm. Only in this realm was great speech or great action possible.

Such are the origins of the term *republic*. In the last quarter of the 20th century, all of this can seem rather far away from us. The *polis*, the political community based on face-to-face relations, is no longer. Citizen virtue is harder to summon up. We are members not of a *polis* but of *society*. Society, the sociologists tell us, is a web of relations. The relations are so intricate and far-reaching as to be well-nigh untraceable. We find it hard to see where our responsibility begins and ends. The distinction be-

Curtis Wilson is a tutor and former Dean of St. John's College, Annapolis. Mr. Wilson gave this traditional toast at the President's dinner in Annapolis for the seniors of 1977. It was a special favorite of Bill O'Grady. Mr. Wilson has kindly consented to its being published here just as it was given.

tween the public and the private becomes badly blurred. And to say the worst that can be said, in society no one really acts, and instead of speech and action and freedom there is behavior, which is studied by the behavioral sciences. Society is ruled by an invisible hand, that is to say, by nobody. And as Rousseau well knew, we members of society, offended terribly by society's invasion of our privacy and its attack on our dignity, nevertheless bear within ourselves a guilty conscience.

I exaggerate, perhaps, in painting the dark picture. There are sparks of light in the darkness, and they are to be cherished and protected. But I think it not so bad a thing that the dark prospect should be before us, and turn us back into ourselves. We have to assess what we are about. There is a justifiable *contemptus mundi*, or turning from the world, and a justifiable *amor mundi*, or turning to the world, and we must learn to balance and use them aright. There is an inner court of the soul, in which ends and means have to be judged and sorted out and arranged in hierarchy. We cannot do everything. We must find the center from which we go out, and to which we return. These inner tasks are imposed on us with especial urgency, because we live when we do, and not in a simpler time. Carrying them out, we may come to see that we are not islands unto ourselves. In being what we are and becoming what we become, we are dependent on a heritage of tradition and knowledge; we are dependent upon friends who can ask unanswerable questions, and now and then show faith in our possibilities. And by a calculus that may be simpler or subtler, we may determine to pay back something for what we owe.

For Who (says Donne) is sure he hath a Soule, unlesse
It see, and judge, and follow worthinesse,
And by Deedes praise it? hee who doth not this,
May lodge an In-mate soule, but 'tis not his.

This toast includes Plato's *Republic* or *Politeia*, a work which as much as any other addresses itself to the question of the relation of knowledge and citizen virtue. Citizen virtue was always problematic, because it would not explain its altruism to itself. Plato's *Republic* gives citizen virtue a new grounding, not in knowledge but in the quest for knowledge. And I think this knowledge that is sought, if the heights and depths of it are recognized to be as high as they are and as deep as they are, will lead to a new kind of civic virtue, not doctrinaire, but more gentle and more humane.

This toast includes the Republic of Letters, by which is meant the community of writers living and dead, who have sought the truth, responding to one another, laboring to complete what others have begun, maintaining their faith in the possibility of human knowing through the use of language. The toast, in effect, pledges allegiance to the maintenance and fostering of that republic.

The toast includes the Republic of the United States of America. The American dream, people were saying a few years back, was becoming a nightmare. We should pledge our alertness to try to keep that from ever happening. Much is wrong. But there are freedoms of thought and action which we enjoy, not merely because of favorable economics, but because of political traditions, and they are not enjoyed widely in the world. To the maintenance of those freedoms, we should also pledge our lives and our honor.

Finally, this toast includes the Republic that is St. John's College. This college is an attempt to provide circumstances under which the great and unanswerable questions can be asked, in which we can be stretched to the height and depth of them, in which we can discover and rediscover the center from which we go out, and to which we return.

Ladies and gentlemen, I give you the Republic.

The Human Condition

For Bill O'Grady, teacher and friend.

When rage relented
After iron dropped flesh screaming,
And armor dripped darkly,
Achilles wept for mortality.

After Hector, god-like of Troy,
Lay bare at his mighty feet,
Torn and burned
By rough rock bloodstained
Round ramparts relentless,
Achilles wept for mortality.

After stately Priam, weeping,
Went to recover,
In arms of longing,
Flesh he called his own,
Achilles wept for mortality.

After fatherly tears convinced,
And suppliant hands touched
For compassion,
And stirred his beating heart,
Achilles wept for mortality.

After stream fell, indistinct,
From eyes together touched
By memories strong
Of father old
And son died young,
Achilles wept for mortality.

And after,
These enemies, both human,
Gazed in wonder,
He at beauty,
And he at words sonorous and brave,
As only eyes still wet
Can clearly see,
When rage finally relents.

—Geoffrey Harris

Geoffrey Harris is an alumnus of St. John's College, Annapolis.

Part II

The Homeric Simile and the Beginning of Philosophy

Kurt Riezler

Translated by David R. Lachterman

Translator's Preface

Kurt Riezler (1882-1955) is quite probably already known to many readers of *The St. John's Review* in virtue of his book *Man: Mutable and Immutable. The Fundamental Structure of Social Life* (Chicago, 1950) and Leo Strauss' *doge* printed in *What Is Political Philosophy?*. Riezler's somewhat astounding civic and administrative careers during the Wilhelmine and then the Weimar regimes in Germany have been lucidly recorded in Wayne C. Thompson, *In the Eye of the Storm. Kurt Riezler and the Crises of Modern Germany* (univ. of Iowa, 1980). His scholarly career began with a monograph on ancient Greek political economy and produced in the years before his exile in the United States two philosophical treatises, *Gestalt und Gesetz: Entwurf einer Metaphysik der Freiheit* (Munich, 1924 [=Form and Law: Sketch of a Metaphysics of Freedom]) and *Traktat vom Schönen: Zur Ontologie der Kunst* (Frankfurt a.M., 1935) [=Treatise on the Beautiful: Towards an Ontology of Art], as well as a notable edition and translation of Parmenides' poem (Frankfurt a.M., 1934). In the United States, in addition to *Man: Mutable and Immutable*, he wrote *Physics and Reality: Lectures of Aristotle on Modern Physics* (New Haven, 1940) and a lengthy essay "Political Decisions in Modern Society," published in *Ethics* 44 (1954). It is perhaps worth noting that Riezler regarded Heidegger as his most important 'teacher', although he appears to have read him through Goethean lenses.

The essay translated below, under the title "Das Homerische Gleichnis und der Anfang der Philosophie," appeared in the periodical *Die Antike* 12 (1936), pp. 253-271. Curiously, Riezler prints the German versions of R. Schröder and Voss von Rupétogether with the pertinent Greek texts of Homer. I have followed his practice by translating these from German into English, even when there are marked departures from the wording or syntax of the original Greek. The notes are my own.

The poet sees and announces the soul as world, the world as soul. The unity of the two is his secret. Goethe, in his *Maxims*, calls art the go-between, the agent of an "unknown law in the object, corresponding to the unknown law in the subject."

The concepts with which the aesthetic, psychological, philosophical tradition in which we live grapple with this secret stem from a way of thinking for which the basic fact is the antecedent division of subject and object, soul and world. Face to face with the original unity which is poetry's secret this initial rending of the question can only flee into the asylum of the 'irrational.' The irrational, however, designates the unknown only relatively to a ratio; this ratio falls silent in the presence of this unknown.

The beginnings of Greek philosophy antedate the separation of subject and object. Even for Plato the question of the soul is ultimately at one and the same time the question of the world. For Heraclitus, as well as Parmenides, the greatest of Plato's predecessors, the φύσις, the κοινὸς λόγος, of both is something prior to the separation of subject and object, the true being of the soul as well as the world, and thus is cosmology and psychology at the same time. Here, too, the unity of the two questions explains why our concepts are unsuitable as well as why the inner meaning of these teachings remains inaccessible.

If both secrets—this inner meaning and that correspondence of an "unknown law"—are closed to us for the

David R. Lachterman (Annapolis, 1965) teaches in the Departments of Philosophy and Greek At Pennsylvania State University.

same reason, can we perhaps dare to get close to the one secret with the help of the other? Perhaps the question of the marvel of sensuous animation, when developed in terms of the perplexities posed by one concrete problem might be able to unveil the inner meaning of those teachings and find its way to that meaning in its own right.

The seeing and telling of the poet is a knowing of the senses and the soul. What is known is not the object as object. What is seen, told, known is Goethe's "unknown law": soul as world, world as soul.

Among the means for achieving this knowledge we find simile and contrast. Homer, the "wisest of the Greeks," uses both with equal mastery. Theophrastus (*de sensu*, I) divides the views of the Ancients in regard to knowledge into γνώσις τῷ ὁμοίῳ and τῷ ἐναντίῳ—knowing through the similar and knowing through the opposite. According to him, Parmenides, Empedocles, Plato held the first view; the followers of Anaxagoras and Heraclitus, the second. Can we perhaps find in the poetic achievements of simile and contrast in Homer the meaning of this 'knowledge'? The issue itself will decide whether this question does or does not make sense.

I

This question must first be directed to those similes in which this achievement is most penetrating and surprising. These fall into the group in which the poet constructs the simile into a parallel narration, which then unfolds the whole image in a parenthesis in accordance with its own law, between a 'just as' and a 'so'-clause in a parenthesis and does this even though the narration itself is presented as a sensible, visible event and therefore does not seem to need the simile. Similes of this kind are peculiar to Homer. They are also the similes in face of which the concepts with which they are usually discussed reveal their inadequacy.

Od. XIX, 204-209:

"...the listening woman melted into flowing tears. As the snow gathered on the ridge of elevated mountains, snow which Winter made to fall, begins to stream as the Spring dissolves it and fills the bed of the running currents,

So the woman melted into tears; her cheeks ran for the husband, who sat next to her..."

(From the German of R.A. Schröder)

τῆς δ' ἄρ' ἀκουούσης ῥέε δάκρυα, τήκετο δέ χρῶς.
ὥς δὲ χιὼν κατατήκετ' ἐν ἀκροπόλοισιν ὄρεσσιν,
"ὦν τ' Εὐρος κατέτηξεν, ἐπὶν Ζέφυρος καταχεύῃ
τηκομένης δ' ἄρα τῆς ποταμοὶ πλήθουσι ῥέοντες
ὥς τῆς τήκετο καλὰ παρήϊα δάκρυ χεύουσης,
κλαιούσης ἔδον ἄνδρα, παρήμενον.

Here, in the first place, singling out one or more points of comparison, the whiteness of the snow and of the

head, the streaming of the water and of the tears, is of no help at all. Perception? What becomes perceptible? Surely not Penelope's external form through mountains, snow, wind, currents. Mood? Certainly not in the sense that our mood when snow starts to melt is meant to let us feel Penelope's mood. The term "mood" is dangerous. Everything for which the history of the arts requires it is far away from Homer.

The simile embraces the entire destiny of Penelope and grasps in retrospect and prospect her inner destiny in the unity of an external image. We see her grown stiff and frozen over long, desolate years, see beneath the first, joyous news the hardness, the cold, the darkness begin to soften outside and inside, to grow warm; we see, by anticipation, even without the poet's speaking about it, in a single, mute self-movement of the image, the entire melting of the snow and see the life begin to glitter once again when Penelope for the first time begins to know that the stranger who brings the first news of her husband is himself this husband. The narrative itself, even if it had wanted to say all of this, could scarcely have linked together the elements which vibrate together and have related them to one another in the way the simile in the unity of its image succeeded in doing.

The terms 'intuition' and 'mood' court and contend for the marvel of 'animation.' The unity of simile and narrative actually accomplishes that marvel. The 'animation' seems a double one. Penelope's tears animate the inanimate snow but, the unanimated gives back two fold to the animated the animation if receives. In the presence of the first animation we usually stammer about transference and anthropomorphism but this way of talking is out of the question here. The second animation is the greater marvel: how can the dead event animate the living, not only for the Greeks, but for us as well, whose picture of Nature is unanimated?

Take a second example: *Iliad* XVII, 53-59.

Menelaus kills Euphorbus who, according to XVII, 811 is fighting in his first battle. They exchange words before they begin to fight. Menelaus reminds Euphorbus of his brother's arrogance and death. Euphorbus draws from the other's warning only the exhortation to avenge his brother and to put his parents' pain to rest by placing in their hands Menelaus' head and weapons. They fight Menelaus' spear strikes through the still delicate neck of Euphorbus and blood steepens the charming locks and the clasps of silver and gold which hold them together.

Everything is sensibly there; nothing non-sensible needs an intuition which only the simile might be able to give it.

Il. XVII, 53-59:

"As a man tends the swelling sapling of an olive tree/
In a lonely spot, where the water gushes up,"

Lofty it grows and stately, and the cooling drafts/
Of all the wafting winds set it gently in motion
And gleaming it burgeons in white flower.//
But, a wind suddenly coming with a powerful whirl/
Rips it from its pit and lays it down on the earth."

(Translated after Voss von Rüpé)

οἷον δὲ τρέφει ἔρνος ἀνὴρ ἐριθηλὲς ἑλαίης
χώρῳ ἐν οἴοπόλῳ ὅθ' ἄλις ἀναβέβρυοχεν ὕδωρ,
καλὸν τηλεθάον· τὸ δέ τε πνοιαί δονέουσιν,
παντοίων ἀνέμων καὶ τε βρύει "ανθεὶ λευκῷ
ἐλθὼ δ' ἐξαπίνης ἀνεμος δὴν λαίλαπι πολλῇ
βόθρου τ' ἐξέστρεψε καὶ ἐξετάνυσσ' ἐπὶ γαίῃ·

Once again the simile and what it achieves are entirely transparent: the olive-tree, sheltered, cooled by winds, sparkling with white blossoms, now uprooted and laid low, embraces in the unity of a single image the parents' concern, rearing and suffering, the youth's beauty, gentleness and sudden end, animating the narrative and animated by it. Euphorbus' death, like Penelope's tears, is the manifestation of human-being [*Daseins*] itself, as a totality of powers which joined to one another prevail over and through man and nature, soul and world in the same fashion.

We would search in vain in these two similes for the basis of the reciprocal play of animation in the usual points of comparison and their aggregate. The whiteness and the running water in the simile of Penelope—what is qualitatively and objectively common leaves us in the lurch.

The third or middle terms of comparison are of a special sort. Not all cases of qualitative and objective commonness can be such *thirds*. The power of animation dwells only in those which, as in the simile of Penelope, are circumstances and movements both of things as well as of the soul—coldness, hardness, rigidity, warming, softening, dissolving—and as features of the first are also ways of being of the other. These *tertia* therefore are not only commonnesses, (κοινά) of any sort whatsoever, belonging to the simile and the narrative, but similarities (ὁμοία) of the subject and the object. Their peculiar character has no name in the conceptual language current among us. I want to avoid naming them.

However, these ὁμοία, each considered in its own right, are not the animating factor in these similes. Neither singly nor in their sum are they the true *tertium*. The key to the animation lies in their concatenation. On their own they are abstract and dead. The simile, like the narrative, interlaces them, lets them be what they are together with and through one another. Constantly trying to name them in isolation makes them lifeless. The *tertium* is an interweaving of these ὁμοία, which are joined to one another in simile and narrative in the same fashion, ἀνὰ τόναυτον λόγον. The *tertium* is in a certain sense a *primum*. It is clearly the function of the simile to detach us

from the object as object. The poet forces our eye from Penelope's face to the snow-covered mountain, from the youth sinking downward to the uprooted olive-tree. In this the *objective* component of both the simile and the narrative and, indeed, the one through the other becomes transparent and now is no longer only object, but 'manifestation,' an image of something. The image is something seen from the first. It is not an image of the object as such, not Penelope nor the snow, but Goethe's "unknown law." *Physis*, the style of the entity, the Greeks named it. The analogous intertwining of those ὁμοία in simile and narrative is a particular aspect, a look, the *eidos* of the whole of this *physis*, which for Homer is not only human-being as a particular entity, but the being of all that is alive. And everything is alive, lively.

However, the Homeric similes are multiform. What they achieve in the narrative is in these two cases something particular, comprising the existence of Penelope as well as that of Euphorbus. In other cases the similes perform differently. However, what the simile achieves for the narrative must be grasped on the basis of what it achieves for poetry. The story narrated, even without the simile, is manifestation, is show and announcement in the transparency of appearance. The simile serves this achievement of the narrative in many different ways. The poet demands greater and lesser services.

Let us take first a much-discussed example of another kind, which surely can be felt even in a merely fleeting contact, like the litter of a butterfly's wing.

Od. V, 50. Hermes is flying over the sea, like a sea-gull.

Od. V, 50-53

"...descending from the aether he fell upon the surface of the high seas, stoutly he swept into it over the abyss, like the cormorant,/
Who fishes in the dread bow of the foaming, salty wave
And often streaks its wings with salt-foam."

(R.A. Schröder)

...ἐξ αἰθέρος ἔμπεσε ποντῷ
σεύατ' ἔπειτ' ἐπὶ κύμα λάρῳ ὄρνιθι ὁικῶς,
ὅς τε κατὰ δεινούς κόλπους ἄλδς ἀτρυγέτοιο
ἰχθῦ ἀγρώσσων πυκινὰ πτερὰ δεύεται ἄλμῃ·

The god doesn't catch any fish. The poet seems to be following the special image of the simile, over and above the so called *tertium*. No doubt he does this for the sake of the sensuous concretion of the sea-gull which we now see as a living gull in front of us. But, this sensuous concretion achieves much more. Thanks to it what is quick is now also easy, effortless, playful mastery and control. Hermes would catch fish if he wanted to. Hermes' flight over the sea is the prelude to Odysseus' clumsy, unavailing raft. The image of men whose lives are difficult is present together with the image of the gods, the θεῶν ζῶντες. Each little word attends to the co-presence of the

difficult in the image of the easy. There are the δεινοὶ κόλποι of the waves; previously there was the staff with which Hermes deludes men's eyes or wakens the sleepers "whom he wills." The simile, like the contrast, is dependent on the transparency of the narrative.

What does the much censured blood-pudding in *Od.* XX, 25 achieve? Odysseus, reining in his fury at the maids, turns back and forth in his lair, with no means of overcoming the suitors.

Od. XX, 25-28:

"As one roasting meat keeps turning the pig's stomach full of fat and trickling blood/
Over the fire from one side to the other/
And the thoughts of the roast lingers in his mind..."

(R.A. Schröder)

ὥς δ' ὅτε γαστέρ' ἀνὴρ πολέος πυρὸς αἰθομένοιο
εμπλείην κνίσσης τε καὶ αἵματος, ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα
αιόλλη μάλα δ' ὠκα λιλαιέται, ὅπη θῆναι,
ὥς ἄρ' ὄγ' ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα ἐλίσσεται μερμηρίζων

What the simile achieves is simple: only the blood-pudding can achieve it. It alone links together into a unity Odysseus' turning to and fro with the completion of the "well-done" plan, finished on every side, as well as with the impatient desire of the hungry man. The service done to the poetry by the simile lies not in the points of comparison, but in their interlinking.

For the critic the blood pudding is encrusted with impressions which make its preparation unsuitable as a simile for needs of the soul. Nonetheless, this encrustation is post-Homeric.

The simile achieves still more, however not through the points of comparison and their interlinking, but through a deviation of the simile from the narrative, a technique quite frequent elsewhere in Homer. The blood-pudding becomes fully cooked; the plan does not. Athena lends the helpless Odysseus her assistance and summons him to sleep.

Here, as in many other passages, the difference between narrative and simile is an artful technique. It shows how the events should or could have unfolded, but did not. The lion with whom the suppressed hero is compared is killed; the hero finds an opening, and gets through. In such difference the co-presence of what didn't occur serves the living concretion, the 'shining-through' of existence just as it is. The actual in its own right, in its whatness [*Sosein*] is alive, 'concrete' and full of presence, in the midst of a swarm of possibilities among which it stands, threatened and needy, in hope, yearning, fear or blindness. In the world of the living the possible is actual and at work. In this insight, too, Homer is wiser than many of his critics. As the simile presses out beyond the strictly comparable Homer is allied with Shakespeare; in restricting himself to the *tertium* Goethe

is separated from both.

A survey of this artful technique leads past many 'halting' and so easily censured Homeric similes, through nuances of every kind, to the very disappearance of the comparable in the opposed.

In *Iliad* I, 86 the opposition has absorbed the similar and replaced the "so as" with an account of time.

As long as the golden day increase, the battle goes on hither and yon without any resolution.

Il. XI, 86-90:

"But, at the hour when woodsmen prepare a meal/
Deep in the glade of the mountain, once their arms have grown tired/
with felling mighty trees; they become/
sated with their labor and long now for refreshing food:/
Just then the Danaeans daringly broke through the enemy's ranks..."

ἦμος δὲ δρυτόμος περ ἀνὴρ ὠπλίσσατο δεῖπνον
οὔρεος ἐν βήσσησιν, ἐπεὶ τ' ἐκορέσσατο χεῖρας
τάμνων δένδρεα μακρά, ἄδος τέ μιν ἵκετο θυμὸν
αὐτοῦ τε γλυκεροῖο περὶ φρένας ἕμερος αἰρεῖ,
τῆμος σφῇ ἀρετῇ Δαναοὶ ῥήξαντο φάλαγγας—

The reckoning of time here conceals the comparison of Danaeans' exertion in battle with the heavy labor of the wood-cutter. The image, meanwhile, points at the same time to their discrepancy: for the first time in the image the Danaeans' courage and perseverance in battle becomes impressively visible; but, so, too, does the other, gentler side of life, everything about it which the words κόρος, ἄδος, γλύκερος, ἕμερος can attach to the resting wood-cutters—in the midst of the battle and without any other relation than that of time. (cf. Dante, *Inferno* II, i).

The so-called 'contrastive effect' merely poses a question; it does not supply the answer. What is the contrast meant to be? Alternation? Intensification? These terms do not reach the issue at which they are aimed.

In each and everyone of his mobile images Homer sees to it, through the smallest, unnameable details, that all the oppositions between which man's life is tensely strung always remain present to one another, that the bright stands close to the dark, the easy next to the difficult, fear next to courage, nothingness next to magnificence each inescapably linked to the other. He has a thousand ways of doing this. He avoids any *chorismos* of the ἑναντία—any isolation of the opposites from one another. Where the episode, as in the battles in the *Iliad*, is in opposition with itself, he interrupts the report of the battle and tells in a pair of verses about the marriage of a warrior who was just killed and about the days of his glory. In *Iliad* XIII, 1 he lets Zeus, looking down from Mt. Ida, train his shining eyes away from the battle around Troy and onto the friendly peoples of Thrace, peoples who drink milk, the most just among men. Or in *Iliad*

XXII, 145, with Hector breathlessly, passionately pursued by Achilles, and while the supposedly uninvolved poet is himself in the grip of the highest emotion, he lets the heroes race past the two sources of the river Scamander and pauses to depict them the one stream which rises from the warm spring, the other, cold as ice; there are the stone troughs, there in times of peace the women and the fair daughters of the Trojans used to wash their shimmering garments.

To be sure it is correct that the antithesis 'intensifies,' that, as Gottfried Hermann in his commentary on this passage in Aristotle's *Poetics* remarks, "*repente objecta pacis imago, certamen redditur terribilius*," that in Rembrandt too "*et lumen ab umbra et umbra ab lumine tantam accipiat vim, quantam singular per se numquam habitura essent*."¹

But, is "intensification" really the ultimate expression for the poetic achievement of contrast? Homer does not intend only the most frightful battle, nor does Rembrandt intend only the darker darkness. What is there is something ultimate which is seen, which has no name—Goethe's "unknown law." *Physis* as the forming of the 'Being' of every being which 'is' there, the source of the essentiality of every essence—this ultimate object of sight is fitted together indissolubly out of war and peace, out of the dark and the bright. Neither the battle nor the darkness is something which can be separated (χωριστόν). It is thanks to the light that the night is. Homer does not look for antithesis because it intensifies. He sees a whole, as that in accord with which the one as well as the other is meant to shine through; because this whole is and is seen, the contrast or antithesis intensifies. There is a way, in both poetry and painting, of contrasting opposites which does *not* intensify. In these cases, the dark and the bright, even when in contrast with one another, remain insubstantial and empty. For both are placed externally next to one another, out of a learned knowledge of contrastive effects, not of the vision of their unity, as the 'manifestation' of that nameless whole.

Let me return once more to Homer's similes. In *Iliad* XI, 547-557, 557-565, two successive similes are developed into complete images of the lion greedy for battle and the stubborn ass. Ajax is both. Homer has us leap from one image of battle to the lion, from the lion to the ass, from the ass to the next image of battle in complete detachment from the objectivity of the object. The changing of the battle-scenes themselves takes place as an exchange of similes. The oppressive phantasy of many interpreters would have liked to stick with either the ass or the lion. Ajax attacks, the hero attacks his inferiors, one against many: a lion storming about greedy for battle; before the crowd of dogs and shepherds who protect the herds with spears and torches he has to turn away, growling. Now, he, like an ass, under the blows of impotent youths who

want to drive him forward, slowly grazes in a meadow and then goes back again satisfied, when and as he pleases. In attacking and returning it is one and the same hero, who imposes on the many inferiors the law of their action. The exchange of similes varies one and the same identity, the way a change of positions would do. In both images doing and suffering, courage and fear, power and powerlessness, rage and forbearance, the one and the many, the noble and the mean are linked together. The mode of interweaving changes something identical. The change is sudden, violent only as far as the *objective* is concerned; that in accord with which this *objective* is transparent as 'appearance' changes without any violence the aspect alone, which it offers as something identical—just as is done in every narrative of changing events, which shines through as poetic vision in keeping with that nameless element which in the changeable interweaving of its moments remains identical as a whole. A "weaker" poet might indeed be on his guard against letting his Ajax turn from a lion into an ass without any transition: only the most extreme power of "transparence" can know how to manage the objective character of the object [*mit dem Gegenständlichen des Gegenstandes umspringen*.]

Iliad XVI, 751-776 embraces three similes in the unity of a single battle-scene. Tone, coloring, feeling are passionately intensified. Hector and Patroclus, the soldiers of the Trojans and the Danaeans fight inconclusively for the corpse of Cebrion. Patroclus, pouncing upon the corpse of Cebrion, is compared to a lion which, breaking into the stables, is hit in the breast—"his own power undoes him." Patroclus, however, is unwounded; the simile thus distances itself from the narrative, this time because Patroclus' imminent death is meant to be foreshadowed. Homer is rich in such advance indications through nuancing.

Just after that Hector leaps from his chariot: now both are like lions who fight on the top of the mountain for the carcass of a deer ἄμφω πεινάοντε, μέγα φρονέοντε (both hungering and both thinking high thoughts.) Now the crowds of the Trojans and the Danaeans storm against one another.

Il. XVI, 765-770.

"And as the Winds, the East and the South,
Vie with one another/to shake a thick wood
In the forest valley,/Beech and ash, the
Wild cornel with its long bark,/
So that they knock their pointed boughs against each
other/and the noise of breaking branches
Rings out powerfully:/
Just so the Trojans and Danaeans rushed against
One another..."

(Voss-Rupé)

ὥς δ' Ἐυρὸς τε Νότος τ' ἐριδαίνετον ἀλλήλοισιν
οὐρεὸς ἐν βήσσης βαθέην πελεμιζέμεν ὕλην

φηγόν τε μελίην τε τανύφλοιόν τε κράνειαν,
αἶ τε πρὸς ἀλλήλας ἔβαλον τανυήκεας δόζους
ἡχῇ θεσπεσίῃ, πάταγος δέ τε ἄγνυμ' ἐνάωνδ'
ὥς τρῶες καὶ Ἀχαιοὶ ἐπ' ἀλλήλοισι θορόντες δῆουν—

The simile does not depict the reciprocity of the battle "with little success," but depicts the warriors' unchained rage, passion, confusion in an image of the greatest agitation. An interpretation sticking to the objective relates the pointed carcasses to the pointed spears. But, the true *tertium* here are not of this sort. This image is followed immediately by the image of a dead man who, amidst the darting spears, the flying arrows, the hurled stones, lies there in a whirl of dust "mighty in his mightiness, the arts of the horses forgotten."

κεῖτο μέγας μεγαλωστί λελασμένος ἵπποσυνάων[776].

The corpse, too, is there from the start: the image of its rest follows upon the image of the totally unleashed battle. In this way Homer links life to death.

The images of battle in the *Iliad* hold good of the whole of human-being. They inflect the whole set of forces 'between' which life is alive. This 'between' is a term drawn from Plato's doctrine of the soul.

II.

If I turn now to the philosophical issues concealed here, this is not done for the sake of the poet. His understanding can do without the elucidation of those issues. We can understand the poet even when our aesthetic concepts shatter against his animated world.

The service which simile and contrast perform for 'animation' contains a philosophical problem of great merit. Here we can follow the hints given by this service only into the inner life of the first questions and answers of Greek philosophy. For the development of this philosophical problem I must refer to my *Traktat vom Schönen* (Frankfurt, 1935).

The *tertium* of Homeric comparisons are of a special sort. They are not random commonalities of objects in simile and narrative. They seem to be so, because our question about them stops with their objective commonness, e.g., the white color, the running water. If we go on to ask about what is in these commonalities from which their animating power stems, their special character becomes visible. These *tertium* are what is common to soul and to things, to the inner and the outer.

The *ὁμοία* of simile and narrative are *ὁμοία* of subject and object. Even the antithetical pairs of contrastive effects are *ὁμοία* of this kind. The alliance of these *ὁμοία* with 'animation' concerns the issue itself and is not an historical matter, whether of Homer or of Greek philosophy. It accompanies the marvel of art everywhere, in every age and in every mode of art. The painter talks about values or valences of colors: opaque-clear, bright-

dark, warm-cold. The animation of colors rests on the play of these 'values.' These values are common to the soul and to things. They are, let me say in passing, not sensible qualities of the eye alone; something in them is common to several senses. In the case of sounds, too, there is the bright and the dark, the warm and the cold. However, the problem of these 'intermodal' sense-qualities does not belong here.

For an age in which qualities, properties and attributes have lived for centuries in a lasting marriage to things and regions of things the problem of these κοινά and their mode of being has been lost. This age explains the common in terms of 'transference.' The term "metaphor" is late; it stems from the time when that lasting marriage was concluded and the tie between thing-region and property was fixed. Transference, however, explains nothing. The ὁμοίον which it is meant to explain precedes it as something in the things on the basis of which the transference is possible and meaningful. Besides, the Homeric similes are no metaphors. The two lions are not μέγα φρονέοντες in virtue of metaphor. Nor is μέγαθυμος or "high-minded" a metaphor. Greatness and height are not originally properties of trees and mountains, tied to bodily space. There 'is' greatness and height in the soul just as there is in trees and mountains prior to the separation of subject and object.

Under the 'jurisdiction' of mythical thinking the image is the very thing itself. The unity of image and thing counts as the decisive mark of this mythical thinking; however, the unity rests on nothing other than the fact that for this thinking a κοινόν of image and thing is the original being, πρῶτως ὄν prior to the objective duality of both: the leonine, therefore, manifest as a first and as the same in this lion and that lion, in its image and in many other instances. The jurisdiction of mythical thinking, however, is at the same time freedom from that enslavement to the object in which we live. Something of this spell and the freedom it confers extends to the similes of Homer, indeed, over and above these, to the end of all poetry and, perhaps,—of all philosophy.

I do not presume to settle anything about the mode of being of these κοινά. I shall not even give them a name drawn from the later history of philosophy. Their nature is ἄτοπόν τι. They are, in any case, neither objects nor concepts. I want to accept them as the poet announces them, without giving them a name: as ways of being, situations, powers, essential features of an existence which is at once the being of the soul and of things.

The poet lets these κοινά 'appear': he reveals them as what shines through in sound, tone, word, rhythm, object. These κοινά of subject and object are therefore manifestly κοινά of the so-called 'form' and, at the same time, of the so-called 'content,' 'values' of the vowels,

consonants, of the syllables, words and sentences, of tone and rhythm, as well as qualities of what these tonalities designate. This 'common,' too, is ἀτοπόν τι and, as a problem of the issue itself, accompanies the marvel of all art. 'Form' and 'content' or what we try to separate under these terms reciprocally animate one another just as simile and narrative do. The root of this reciprocal animation is the same in both cases.

Philosophy, that poor hobbler on the crutch of the concept, has to try to name what the poet allows to 'appear.' We have names for such κοινά from the beginnings of philosophy: the warm and the cold, the dense and the rare, the bright and the dark, the heavy and the light and so on. The ὁμοιον and ἐναντία based on γνῶσις τῶ ὁμοίῃ ἢ τῇ ἐναντίῃ are of this kind. They are κοινά of the soul and of things—not the 'material' elements, the designation under which they entered into our philosophical tradition from the reports of the Aristotelians. As κοινά they provide the basis for knowledge. Goethe (*Farbenlehre, historischer Teil*, I) says about Empedocles' 'pores': "We can also observe that this ancient did not take this idea so crudely and corporeally as many moderns have; instead, he merely found there a more convenient symbol. For the manner in which the outer and the inner are each present for the other, in which the one is on harmony with the other, bears witness straightaway to a higher viewpoint, which appears still more spiritual when expressed in that general thesis: Like is known by like."² Empedocles, fragment 109 (Diels): "With earth we observe the earth, with ether, the divine ether, with fire, however, the destroying fire, love with love, hate with wretched hate." In this passage the so-called four elements appear on the same level as love and hate as essences, not as 'stuffs.' Nor is the earth the earthly, water—is not our water not even for Empedocles, simply an heir and descendant of this poetic teaching.

III

Let me return to the poet in my search for a way of pointing out the original meaning of this teaching.

The ὁμοια of the Homeric similes, like the ἐναντία of his contrastive effects, as κοινά of the soul and things, are not χωριστά, not set apart from one another. The poet does not set them apart from one another; he relates them to one another, intertwines them and lets their interlacings change. Just this interlacing is the source of animation. The κοινά are live only in it. Not the hard taken by itself alone, without relation to the soft but the hard as something which has become hard, something which subsequently will become soft. But not only this—the poet is on his guard against isolating not only the contraries, but also pairs of contraries. His 'hard' in its presence

together with the soft is at the same time and, indeed, essentially and always, among the bright and the dark, the warm and the cold and other pairs of this sort. It is 'among' many. It is alive in this 'betweenness.' The poet does not separate. He does not name. For naming is a dividing. He lets [the κοινά] 'become manifest'—manifestation intertwines, intertwining animates. What becomes manifest is life itself, the being of all that is alive, as a totality of changing forces intertwined with one another: the poet's way of giving form to the object holds good for its transparency much as it does for the movement of sounds and tones in the arrangement of words and rhythm. Homer's wisdom is his 'knowing' about the whole of existence: his art is to let this 'knowing' become manifest.

Hence, these κοινά of subject and object are surely not an original many. They would be dead not only if they were separated, but even if they were arrayed alongside one another. They would be words, not essences. Their 'concretion' is their 'having grown together into one another.' There is actually only one κοινόν, whose sides, moments, joints are these κοινά, one κοινὸς λόγος of life itself. Homer sees this κοινόν in the change of forms and events, in the shifting interlacing of its moments, as one and the same.

The *tertia* of the Homeric similes are not single joints, moments of this one, but analogies of a particular interlacing. Analogy detached from the objectivity of the object, serves to make this interlacing transparent. The particularity of the interlacing of the κοινά is a special aspect of the one κοινόν, of what ultimately shines through. The poet's vision and voice aim at this latter.

As the events change the progress of the narrative alters the interlacing of the moments and, with it, the particularity of the aspects. The change itself reveals the single concatenation as a special aspect of their eternal arrangement. After the snow-image of Penelope dissolving into tears the poet continues:

Od. XIX, 209-212:

And the bold Odysseus/pited his sorrowing
Wife deep in his heart. And still/he kept
His gaze fixed and straight, as if his eyes
Were of horn and his brow of iron./
Artfully he hid his tears."

(R.A. Schröder)

αὐτὰρ Ὀδυσσεὺς
θυμῷ μὲν γοῶσαν ἔην ἑλπαίρε γυναῖκα,
ὀφθαλμοὶ δ' ὥς εἰ κέρα ἔστασαν ἠὲ σίδηρος
ἀτρέμας ἐν βλεφάροισιν δόλω δ' ὁ γε δάκρυα κεῦθεν.

The simile of melting snow shines through these verses as well, with the force of its transparency, verses which now repeat in a transformed arrangement the conflict of hard and soft and much else which is nameless in the

gestures and behavior of Odysseus. The same existence changes the manner of its visibility.

The Homeric similes are impassioned movement. But, deeper than any change is a rest which inwardly prevails through the restless events. This rest is not, by any means, a subjective repose of the epic, detached poet. Homer is always and everywhere passionately affected. What is at rest is what is seen, not the poet's seeing eye. Movement itself, its passion, is what is at rest: What ultimately shines through, inescapable and eternally fitted together, existence itself, the changeable, as something eternally alike. The classical, as a systematic, not an historical concept, must be based on this unchangeable arrangement of what is ultimately seen. I dared to undertake this task in my essay on the beautiful.

We are now, for the first time, getting closer to that inner meaning in which the first visions of Greek Philosophy harmonize with one another. These visions have their roots in Homer's vision of the world. Homer is closer to its inner meaning than Theophrastus. According to Theophrastus's report concerning γνῶσις τῷ, the ὁμοία seem to be an original many, elements of the inner and the outer, from the mixture and separation of which the particular features of things and their changing structures arise and pass away. The controversial question of knowledge is then whether we know the bitter through the bitter outside of us or through the sweet. The original teaching, however, knows nothing of such an alternative. Homer's knowledge embraces both. It comes about both τῷ ὁμοίῳ as well as τῷ ἐναντίῳ. Parmenides and Heraclitus, too, oppose the separation of contraries. For both their separation is a ψεῦδος. Heraclitus, Fragment 57: "Hesiod is the teacher of most men. He is supposed to know the most he—who does not even know day and night—they are one." Parmenides, Frag. 8, line 53: "Mortals establish two instead of one and in this they go astray: darkness and light, divided from one another, each on its own not the same as the other, both the one and the other for itself." From this division, the πρῶτον ψεῦδος, arises, δόξα the specious knowledge of mortals. If the contraries are inseparable and night and day are one and the same, then the alternative of γνῶσις τῷ ὁμοίῳ ὁμοίῳ or ἐναντίῳ is a controversy *within* δόξα.

In Parmenides and Heraclitus alike, naming, too, is in disrepute, along with the separation of these ὁμοία from one another. Naming occurs as separating (Parm., Frag. 9; Heraclitus, Frag. 67). Philosophy, although directed to making conceptual distinctions, begins by discrediting naming. Ὀνομάζειν as naming of things separately is opposed to true νοεῖν. This νοεῖν is *not* 'conceptual' thinking. This νοεῖν is a seeing, the seeing together of the inseparable.

The 'commons' of the soul and things, on which this

knowledge rests, are no more in this philosophy than in Homer an original many, which must be divided and then placed in a sequence. There is an original one, which, being prior to its manyness, articulates itself in the latter as into its own moments. These moments are not anything 'objective,' spread out in space and time, they are *present* to one another: as "continually present even while absent" (Parm., Frag. 2). Thus the very same νοῦς which has to do with truth *sees* (λεῖσσει) these moments. There is, therefore, only one 'common.' This 'common' is the 'one' of Anaximander, concealing and securing in itself all oppositions—it is the much-debated ὄν of Parmenides, which never is something of the past, never something of the future, but αἰὲν νῦν, ὁμοῦ πᾶν, is the eternal present and everything at once; it is the κοινὸς λόγος of Heraclitus, the essence and styling [Artung] of what is, which is there and insofar as it 'is'—φύσις, which loves to conceal itself (Frag. 123). Attending to φύσις we say and do the true (Frag. 112).

What these thinkers strive gropingly and vainly to say—Heraclitus in riddling words, transmitted to us only in fragments which have grown dumb and been misconstrued, Parmenides in the verses which command us to see what it is unsayable, an unsayable mirrored in a phenomenology of nature, over whose specious essence the goddess of the truth in the hidden holds sway—Homer sees and announces this, by letting it 'appear' without saying it. The vision of the poet outlasts the concepts of the philosopher.

Thus, Homer might help us to understand Heraclitus: Heraclitus, Fragment 67 (Diels):

[scil. ἐστὶ μεῶ] ὁ θεὸς ἡμέρη εὐφρόνη, χεῖμων θέρος, πόλεμος εἰρήνη, κόρος λιμός, ἀλλοιοῦται δὲ ὅκωσπερ πῦρ, ὅπταν συμμιγῇ θυώμασιν, ὀνομάζεται δὲ καθ' ἡδονὴν ἑκάστου.

["The God is day night, cold heat, war peace, satiety want; comes different just like fire whenever it is mixed with perfumes it is names after the flavor of each."]]

Karl Reinhardt's interpretation emphasizes the oppositions: Being Change Name. It *is* the God, Day Night, Winter Summer, War Peace, Satiety Hunger he *changes* himself only as the fire does, when it is mixed with the perfumes. The *Name* however, is a nugatory choice of each man.³ Homer's images, shapes, events—the entire world of his objects and their changes *is* the color and lambency of the flame, the changing look of the same, which as one is inescapably fitted and joined to itself, the being of the soul as well as of things—the unknown, which it is the poet's might and secret to let shine through.

The power of philosophy is the living question. Without the latter the testimonies of past thinking remain as dumb

as the things themselves—with it, the one might illumine itself in the other. Thus the secret of animation in simile and contrast in Homer might help us in explaining the inner meaning of the first philosophical question and the first answer.

The very formulation, however, which that secret finds in this explanation, conceals a hidden danger, even though it may be more appropriate to the problem than the concepts of our aesthetics. This danger is the separation of appearance and "idea."

The multicolored world of sensible shapes is for the poet appearance, shining through as appearance, and in this shining through is essence itself and its truth. This essence *is* only in appearing. The appearance *is* itself what appears.

The course of philosophical endeavor splits apart this unity. It devalues appearance into semblance. Its pathos is directed against the mortals, whose "long-experienced habit" (Parm., Frag. 1, line 34), abandoned as they are to changeable things, stumbles in the darkness. Philosophy as it gropes for the true essence uses as its means abstract thought. "Reason" stands opposed to the senses. However, every separation of *ὁρατόν* and *νοητόν*, of a *mundus sensibilis* and *mundus intelligibilis*, every *chorismos* of sensible thing and idea, stands powerlessly before the marvel of the beautiful. For precisely this is the marvel and its incomparable power that here thinking happens as perception, the intelligible itself turns into the

sensible, unnamed, but visibly there "in person"—the *νοητόν* itself, this is precisely that ultimate, which in the question of being as "what is sought and gives rise to perplexity from long since and now and in the future" (Aristotle, *Metaph.* Zeta 1) has always been wooed by the greatest names in philosophy.

Indeed, this *νοητόν* 'is' only as *ὁρατόν*. It is in no way *χωριστόν*. Any essence which does not appear lacks essence for any art.

Plato, too, who placed the 'beautiful itself' and the pure vision of it above every visible appearance, knew about this (*Phaedrus* 250e): "It was the lot of beauty alone that the most visible is at the same time the most worthy of love."

Hence, the inner marvel of art, warning against any *chorismos*, accompanies the history of philosophy.

Translator's Notes

1. These references are to G. Hermann's annotated edition of the *Poetics* (Leipzig, 1802) and read in translation: "when the image of peace is set suddenly in contrast, the contest is rendered more terrible" . . . "light takes from darkness and darkness from light more force than either could ever have had on its own."
2. See Goethe, *dte-Gesamtausgabe*, Band 41 (Munich, 1963), p.12.
3. See Karl Reinhardt, *Parmenides und die Geschichte der griechischen Philosophie* (Bonn, 1916).

The Origin of Philosophy

Jon Lenkowski

I

According to a long and venerated tradition, what came to be called "philosophy" *originated* in the ancient Greek world—more specifically in Ionia in Asia Minor (now southwest Turkey). Its birth is dated at somewhere around the very late seventh or early sixth century b.c., and is tied to the name of a certain Thales of Miletus—tied to Thales mainly on the strength of two statements attributed to him: viz., that the *arche* of everything is water, and that all things are full of gods, or full of soul—dark sayings, very dark sayings! The appearance of philosophy there, as well as elsewhere, was *entirely unprecedented*.

It has long been of great interest to scholars, why and how philosophy might have appeared just when and where it did. This has led to all sorts of conjectures, some more likely than others. Let me pursue for a short while the best of these. Let me tell you a likely story.

First the Mediterranean itself. Its geography encouraged coastal development, navigation and trade. The broken geography of the Greek peninsula and the neighboring islands in particular promoted this. This had political consequences as well: for the fact that the Greek world was broken up into a number of small entities deterred any tendency toward centralized autocratic rule and fusion into a large imperial entity, as had happened to the great river civilizations of Babylonia, Sumaria and Egypt. The

tendency of these small Greek tribes and villages was rather to retain their independence, so that when they did form into cities ruled by kings, the authority of the king was limited by a council of peers. In the meetings of these councils all things got discussed and decided. It was here that the tremendous role of the *logos*, of the spoken word, of argument (where one had to listen as well as be listened to) got developed. It was here also that self-legislation appeared for the first time. With all political matters being decided by these councils—an atmosphere in which the notion of law by fiat would be anathema—deliberation about what laws would be best would have to play a prominent role. But such a discussion could only occur if it had already been seen that laws themselves are not eternal and immutable. This realization was also the result of travel and trade. (It should be noted that the two great lawgivers, Lycurgus and Solon, had travelled extensively—something which was thought to *qualify* them to be legislators.) Exposure to the different peoples around the Mediterranean seems to have produced a spirit of give-and-take, not only with respect to goods, but perhaps more importantly with respect to customs and opinions. This exposure produced an entirely unprecedented openness: reflection on the varieties of ways of life and traditions led necessarily to reflection on one's own beliefs and inherited customs. *Everything* could now be reflected upon and discussed—which meant that it was no longer immutable. Hence Hegel wisely remarks (Einl., *Vorles. Gesch. Phil.*) that political freedom and freedom of thought are inseparable, and that therefore philosophy only appears in history where free institutions are formed.

Jon Lenkowski is a tutor at St. John's College, Annapolis. The *Origin of Philosophy* was originally delivered as a formal lecture at St. John's College, Annapolis in 1985.

In the same way that the physical layout of the Mediterranean encouraged travel, it also encouraged colonization. Miletus in Ionia in Asia Minor was one of the first of such Greek colonies. This land was Greek-speaking and was peopled by Greeks who had colonized it after fleeing from marauding Dorians on the Greek mainland before 1000 b.c. By the seventh century, Miletus was itself already a metropolis, itself sending out colonies. Thales of Miletus seems to have taken advantage of all the opportunity this setting offered. Like most of what is supposed to be known about him his dates are conjectural. His birth is probably somewhere between 636 and 624 b.c. (this depends on whether one believes Diogenes or Appollodorus), and he lived until approximately 546 b.c. His ancestry was most probably Ionian and therefore Attic (according to Diogenes I, 23), through he may also have had some Phoenician blood (according to Herodotus I, 170). He was in the olive trade—a fact which obliged him to travel fairly widely in the eastern Mediterranean. He seems to have taken full advantage of this. While visiting Mesopotamia, he apparently learned what the Babylonians knew of astronomy. Most of this was mathematically imprecise, and based on observational records, most of which are questionable. But he was, as a consequence, able to predict an eclipse on 27. or 28. May, 585 b.c.—an important enough event since it changed the course of a war. He may even have written a treatise on nautical astronomy—though this is doubtful.

He also travelled to Egypt and learned what they knew of geometry. Here he seems to have really come into his own element. There are either five or six theorems attributed to him—again, according to whom one believes. What one must notice in these theorems is a mathematical precision and theoretical *generality* not present in any of the so-called “approximate area” formulas of the Egyptian geometry. Especially in his theorem that the sides of any similar triangles are proportional, we see a fully developed interest in *generality*. Something like the *universal* seems to have been discovered.

It may, then, have been his success with mathematical generality that led him to seek for generalities elsewhere as well. Hence his pronouncements that the *arche* of all things is water and that all things are ensouled. As for the particular contents of these pronouncements—again conjectures. Listen to Aristotle: “*Probably* the idea was suggested to him because the nutriment of everything contains moisture . . . also because the seeds of everything have a moist nature.” (*Meta* 983b) And: “Some say soul is diffused throughout the universe, and *perhaps* that is what Thales meant in saying all things are full of gods.” (*De An.* 411a)

This concludes my likely story. Notice how comprehensible it’s all become! Why, then, do I still have the nag-

ging sense that something is missing—not something in the *details* of this account, but something *essential*? What I’ve lost, or missed completely, in my attempt to reconstruct the historical event, is *everything philosophical*. If I really pay attention to this, I see that this failure, which historians of philosophy customarily settle for, is the inevitable result of having taken the question of the origin of philosophy to be a historical question in the first place. I see, furthermore, that not only this, but *any* attempt to turn philosophy into a historical event, finally leads me nowhere—nowhere at all.

It looks as though we’ll have to make a completely new beginning—perhaps a quite different kind of beginning—in order to find our way to the beginning of philosophy. In making this new departure, it may not be necessary to abandon completely our interest in Thales.

Of all that is written about Thales, most of it is repetitive, unimaginative and tedious—a point which I have, in these opening few minutes of the lecture, tried to make you *painfully* aware of. But by far the greatest fault of writers on Thales, is their failure to take him seriously. This is true not only of the chroniclers, but also—sad to say—of philosophers themselves. One rare and beautiful exception is Friedrich Nietzsche. He speaks briefly of Thales in his little book, *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*. Let’s listen:

“Greek philosophy seems to begin with an absurd notion, with the pronouncement that water is the origin and mother’s lap of all things. Is it really necessary to stop and be serious about this? Yes, and for three reasons. First, because the pronouncement asserts something about the origin of things. Second, because it does so without pictures or fables. And finally, third, because in this pronouncement is contained—even though only in larval form—the thought: All is One. The first-mentioned reason leaves Thales still in the company of the religious and superstitious. The second takes him out of this company and shows him to us as a natural scientist. But it is in virtue of the third reason that Thales is to be regarded as the first Greek philosopher.”

The thought: All is One. That is, Thales is the first philosopher because it is he who first discovered *The Whole*. What does this discovery of the whole point to about the mind or understanding of its discoverer? And why does this make him the first philosopher? It is this question which the remainder of this lecture will address.

II

In the second chapter of the *Metaphysics* Aristotle says: “For it is by *wondering* that men both now and in the beginning began to philosophize.” (982b12-13) Philosophy begins in wonder—but in *what precisely does wonder begin*? We refer philosophy to wonder, but in so doing we must not forget that wonder itself may be *cause* for wonder.

Aristotle goes on to say in the same passage: "So... they philosophized in order to escape from ignorance..." (982b19-20) And: "One who is in perplexity and wonder thinks himself to be ignorant." (982b17-18) To philosophize is to seek to escape from ignorance. And to know that one is in a state of ignorance is to be in a state of perplexity and wonder. The two states are the same. Thus, knowledge of ignorance mediates the relation of philosophy to perplexity and wonder—which means that to philosophize and to be in wonder and perplexity are the same. In the *Theaetetus* Socrates tells this as well to Theodorus: he says that the philosopher is "... ignorant and perplexed in all things." (175b4-6) But something else surfaces here in connection with wonder itself. Aristotle speaks of "one who is in *perplexity and wonder*". To be in perplexity and to wonder are the same.¹ To wonder is to be in perplexity. *Theaetetus* bears witness to this. He says, in response to Socrates' statement of the puzzles of size and number: "And by the gods, Socrates, I am perplexed as soon as I begin to wonder what on earth these things are, and sometimes when I begin to look into them I really become dizzy." (*Theaet.* 155e6-8) Socrates responds: "This affection, to wonder, really shows that you are a philosopher; for there is no other beginning of philosophy than this..." (*Theaet.* 155d1-4)

We can marvel at this, and can so be led to ask whether wonder and the marvelous are the same.

We can marvel at something—a thing of beauty or astonishment—because it is extraordinary or unique. We can become captivated by it. Such a thing could be called "wonderful", but is this that wonder in which philosophy begins? "Captivation" is a fit word here because the beholding of the marvelous is kind of bondage. It is a standing-still, a cessation of motion, a πάθημα or affection induced from without. Albertus Magnus, however in his *Commentary on the Metaphysics of Aristotle*, makes the following observation:

"Now the man who is puzzled and wonders apparently does not know. Hence wonder is the movement of the man who does not know on his way to finding out, to get to the bottom of that at which he wonders and to determine its cause." (*In I Meta.*, Tr. 2, Ch. 6)

Although the beholding of the marvelous may give rise to wonder, they do not seem to be the same. Wonder—that wonder which is identical with puzzlement—is a *movement*, a movement in the one who is puzzled. Is it then a πάθημα induced from "within"? Is it a πάθημα at all? Or is it perhaps an ἐνέργεια, a being-at-work? Or is that the peculiar character of philosophy—that it is a πάθημα which is at once an ἐνέργεια? In *Pericles*, Shakespeare has Simonides say: "... Wonder, that is king of thoughts." (II, iii, 28) Is wonder, then, a way of thinking? If so, it would be an extraordinary way of thinking.

But in this way would it be a movement. This is more than to marvel or to be astonished. To wonder is to think ἀπόρως, to think "without passage": to "move without moving"—an extraordinary way of thinking!

Wonder is indeed the most baffling of things, for it calls forth itself; and this it does in two ways; 1. It is παράλογον—unexpected; it is absolutely spontaneous, absolutely unmotivated. And 2. It causes us to wonder about itself.

What can evoke wonder? According to Aristotle, "... at first they wondered about the strange—out of place (ἀτόπων)—things closest at hand, and then continuing in this way step by step, they came to be in perplexity about the greatest things, such as the affections of the moon, and those of the sun and stars, and about the coming-to-be of the All." (*Meta.* 982b13-17) One can wonder about everything, about the whole. This is not surprising. We know already from Hesiod (*Theog.* 780) that Thaumás is the offspring of Tethys and Gea. Wonder is the offspring of the waters and the earth. Wonder is the offspring of the whole. It is from the whole that wonder arises. It is the whole which evokes wonder. This means that the condition for wonder is the being of the whole, the having of a whole. It is only within the whole, within the framework of the having of a whole, that wonder can arise. And this means that wonder is possible only for man.

Wonder is human but, to follow Hesiod, it has a divine origin. The connexion which *Theaetetus* makes between wonder and perplexity leads Socrates not only to the further connexion of wonder to the origin of Philosophy, but also to the divine origin of wonder. To refer to its divine origin is, we know from numerous passages in Plato, to suggest that no account can be given for it⁴, and that is to point to its own perplexing character. Wonder is sent to man from the gods. It is a "divine gift" (Θεῖα μοῖρα). But to be in wonder is to be perplexed, is—in *Theaetetus*' words—"to become dizzy". A truly strange—ironic—and marvelous gift!

To wonder is to be in perplexity. But what exactly is it to be in perplexity? Is it the same as to "seek to escape from ignorance"? Aristotle begins the *Metaphysics* in the following way:

"All men by nature desire to know. A sign of this is the delight we find in our sensings; for even apart from their usefulness, sensings are delighted in for themselves alone, and above all others that sensing which comes through the eyes... for... we prefer, so to speak, seeing to everything else. The reason is that, more than any other kind of sensing, seeing makes us know and makes manifest many differences." (980a22-27)

Seeing earns its preeminence and its delightfulness from the fact that, more than any other kind of sensing, it "makes manifest many differences". It is through sight that "manyness" is made most manifest. But that means

that the delight (ἀγάπησις) is taken in the manyness itself. The desire to know makes its first appearance as the love of manyness. It is the endless variety of sights that first attracts one's attention and interest. It is not simply the beauty of these sights, but their seemingly endless changingness, that evokes one's interest. One delights in the anticipation of what is to come. This ἀγάπησις is at once "delight" and "love". The desire for knowledge first appears as the "love of novel sights".

We are reminded here immediately of the distinction which Glaucon makes (*Republic* V, 475d, 476b) between φιλοθεαμία ("love of novel sights") and φιληκοῖα ("love of hearing from mere pastime") on the one hand, and φιλοσοφία on the other hand. He is very hesitant to include the φιλοθεάμονες and φιλήκοοι among the philosophers. Why? Because they run around trying to miss nothing. They make no distinction as to their worth among the things that may be learned. No learning is worthier than any other. This is learning which occurs therefore in the complete absence of what is good—which raises the question of whether it is learning at all. No distinction is acknowledged between the less important and the more important things. Yet the recognition of this difference between the higher and the lower is the mark of the wise man, and—though it sounds a paradox—it is doubtful whether there can be learning which is not guided by wisdom. They are not philosophers because they do not learn with an eye toward wisdom; they fail to see the difference between that learning which is wise and that which is not. But most importantly: they are not philosophers because their "desire for knowledge" does not arise from a condition of self-conscious ignorance.

If the love of novel sights is the beginning of the desire for knowledge, then the beginning of the desire for knowledge is not itself the beginning of philosophy. Philosophy begins in wonder, but the love of novel sights is mere curiosity.

Curiosity begets thinking which is not ἄπορον (perplexed), and as such is ἄπειρον (indefinite) i.e., it has no natural end; it has no goal. But to wonder is to *think aporetically*: it is not ἄπειρον because wisdom is the goal of philosophy, however ultimately aporetic that wisdom may be. Curiosity and wonder are not the same.

In *Being and Time*, Heidegger remarks that "...curiosity is concerned with the constant possibility of distraction. Curiosity has nothing to do with θαυμάζειν—with the beholding of entities in wonder. To wonder to the point of not understanding is something in which it has absolutely no interest." (*Sein und Zeit*, §36, p.172) I know I'm being very hard on curiosity, but I must tell you that I'm doing so to make a point, to emphasize the difference—and I think it is a very great difference—between curiosity and wonder. But I would probably not be inclined to go as far

as Hegel who characterizes curiosity (because of its "rambling"—*Faselei*) as a disease. (*Phil. des Geistes*, §408, Zusatz)

To wonder is to be in perplexity. And if that is not to be identified simply with the "desire to know" (since the latter first appears as mere curiosity), we have to ask again: What is it to be in perplexity?

In *Theaetetus*, Socrates spends some time in a digression with Theodorus (172-177), in which he is careful to distinguish the way of philosophy from the way of contentious arguing. Within this conversation he gives us a description of the philosopher, a description which is playfully modelled on Thales, and especially on the reputed fact of Thales' having fallen into an open pit or well. We want to see if this description helps us to understand what it means to be in perplexity.

The relevant text is 173c7-174e5. There are nine distinguishable characterizations of the philosopher. I will mention just the first of these:

He doesn't know the way to the agora, or the whereabouts of the court or the senate. (173c7-d2)

Does this tell us something about the philosopher's perplexity? It *does* if we translate it into a more general formulation of the claim. This would be the claim that

The genuine philosopher doesn't know what is clear and obvious to everyone—the things which are most familiar to, and taken for granted by, everyone else.

This clearly distinguishes the philosopher from everyone else: In what common understanding finds most familiar, most relies on, takes *most* for granted, the philosopher sees the greatest of difficulties. It is the philosopher alone who sees that what *we* (i.e. common understanding) begin with, and initially regard as most clear and intelligible, is *in itself* most confused and unintelligible. To move from what *we regard* as clear to what is *in itself* clear, we must first have acquired the insight that what we initially regard as clear is really ἄπορον. To acquire this insight is to begin to philosophize. To be a philosopher is to be in perplexity about all that ordinary understanding takes for granted as clear and intelligible.

We can make this point even more forcefully: In the midst of this discussion with Theodorus, Socrates relates the story of Thales' having fallen into a well, or pit, and points out how laughable this is for ordinary understanding. But shortly thereafter (174c4-5), he characterizes the philosopher generally as always "... falling into pits and into every sort of perplexity. ..." Earlier in the dialogue (165b7), in response to Theaetetus' claim that any answer would be impossible, Socrates purposely uses this expression, "being caught in a pit" ("ἐν φρέατι συνεχόμενος").

"Being caught in a pit" is to be understood here as being caught in a question from which there is no escape. Socrates understands Thales' falling into the pit completely non-literally: to fall into a pit means to fall into perplexity.

Thales fell into a pit. The ground gave way beneath his feet. He lost his *ground*. He lost that on which he was used to standing, that which he could ordinarily *trust*. What slipped away from Thales was the totality of the things which are accepted and taken absolutely for granted by everyday understanding, the things upon which we ordinarily stand, the things which usually *stand under us*—all that is familiar, our familiar *grounds*.

To fall into perplexity then means that all this slips away. If this happens constantly, as Socrates suggests at 174c4-5, that means that to be a philosopher is to be constantly without ground to stand on. All that was familiar becomes and remains strange. No longer can anything be taken for granted or trusted. Thales was apparently the first to suffer this, which is why he is the first philosopher.

But what precisely is involved in this fall into perplexity, in which one loses one's ground? What is this "ground" that one loses, and what is involved in its loss? To "*fall into perplexity*" ("εἰς ρέατα ἐμπίπτων") requires, of course, something to *fall from*. It presupposes the *de facto* givenness what is to slip away. And this means it presupposes within the philosopher himself a prior non-philosophic condition. That means: a prior condition of naive acceptance and trust. So not only is wonder possible only for man; it is possible only insofar as man already has a world.

But this too needs clarification; for the world does not after all disappear or become radically transfigured with the fall into perplexity. The world does not suddenly change and become unrecognizable. Things go on exactly as before. Our passive expectancies concerning the general flow of things remain fully operative and undisappointed. I will borrow an expression from Edmund Husserl, and say that, although I have acquired the non-natural—i.e., philosophical—posture, the *typicality* of the world and of our experience of the world remains entirely unaffected by this. Husserl comes to mind especially in this context because there is no one in modern times—and I mean *no one*—who has devoted as much attention to the problem of the beginning of philosophy. Let me quote one short passage from the *Cartesian Meditations*:

"Meanwhile the world experienced in this reflectively grasped life goes on being for me (in a certain manner) 'experienced' as before, and with just the content it has at any particular time. It goes on appearing as it has appeared before; the only difference is that I, as reflecting philosophically, no longer keep in effect (no longer accept) the natural believing involved in experiencing the world—though that believing too is still there and grasped by my noticing regard." (Pp. 19-20)

So everything remains recognizable and familiar. What becomes transformed, however, is this familiarity itself. It is this familiarity itself which now becomes strange. We need not rest here with paradox: This "familiarity" has two aspects, which coincide but are not the same. We are from the outset "at home" in the world. That means: not only is there always a certain regularity about the world, at least as to its general style, but the world is also from the outset there for us as simply—immediately (not through some "symbolic" system, e.g.), unthematically, naively—*understood*. Every encounterable objectivity has not only a *typical style*, but also a determinate *meaning* or *sense*. *The world* itself, as the universal, most comprehensive context of all things, of all the particulars within it, is thereby the universal context of sense in which each particular, delimited, or partial sense is located. Each partial or delimited sense *is such* only by virtue of its being found, located, within this comprehensive context of all sense. The world is the universal context of all sense. It is a "meaning-context"; it is *the* universal meaning-context. We have from the outset, accordingly, a certain *understanding* of the world *as such*, as a whole; from the outset the world *as a whole* has for us a certain *sense*. This is the most pregnant sense of "familiarity". Though this "understanding" remains for the most part non-thematic, we are never without it; we always move with this horizon of understanding. This horizon of understanding *is* our world. To "have" a world, to "be at home" in the world, to have a comprehensive, all-encompassing context of meaning and sense, of understandability—all of this is to say the same thing: *The world is* the comprehensive context of meaning and sense.

To "*fall into perplexity*" is to lose one's footing, to lose one's *ground*. Falling into perplexity involves the slipping-away of the totality of what is accepted and taken absolutely for granted by everyday understanding. This is captured nicely by the German word, *Unheimlichkeit*, because of its double sense of "homelessness" and "strangeness", "uncanniness". One is longer "at home"; all that is familiar (in the designated sense) becomes strange. To "*fall into perplexity*" means that the world comes as a whole to lose its *in-se-et-per-se* understandability. That means: it ceases to hold sway as ultimately valid and independent. It is no longer simply "*understood*". In fact, it is only now that the question of understanding, of the world's understandability, becomes at all an issue. The world now presents itself as *no longer in-dependent*, but as in need of grounding, in need of explanation. All the "parts" of the world—all things and events, including ourselves—though they remain, and remain as recognizably the same as before, though they retain, that is, their typicality—nevertheless become strange. They become no longer simply understood or understandable. When we say that the ground

slips away, then, we mean that what slips away is the *sense* of the world: i.e., *the world itself*, as the comprehensive context of meaning. What slips away is our understanding.

To fall into perplexity is to come to no longer *understand* anything. We lose our grounds, the things which ultimately *ground* our understanding. It is these "grounds" whereby our understanding is guided, whereby it understands, *when* it understands. Whatever we understand, we understand via these grounds.

These grounds are always at work, though we ordinarily remain unaware of them thematically. But should a question arise concerning any of the things we ordinarily experience, the thing in question is referred by our understanding automatically, passively, to these grounds. I.e., understanding moves automatically to these grounds to "locate" the things in question, to return it to its understandability. In this way, "things"—all things, including our selves—dependent on these grounds, are traceable to them; these grounds underlie and are at work in all things. They *account for* all things.

To say that they *account for* all things, for everything, is also to say that they are responsible for the various ways in which things are interrelated. By this I don't mean interaction in the narrowly mechanical sense, but rather the internal references A has to B and to other things, the references inherent in the being of A, in its innerness, in its whatness. It is to these "whatnesses" that things and their interrelations are to be referred, in which they are grounded, and on which they are completely dependent. So it is that things are more than a mere "many", more than just isolated individuals, but are μόρια—i.e., are *parts* of a *whole* (ὅλον). The whole (τὸ ὅλον) is, accordingly, more than a composite "All" (σύνθετον πᾶν). It is an order of interrelations, an ordered whole, a κόσμος. The whatnesses of things bind things together so that all things form together a comprehensive context of interrelations—i.e., a "world", a κόσμος, an ordered whole. It is only insofar as things are so bound together that we can at all speak of a "world", an integral whole. "The world", then, as an ordered whole, is this interrelatedness of whatnesses. It is this that I had in mind when I referred to the world as the comprehensive context of meaning and sense.

The "grounds" to which I have been referring, then, turn out to be the "whatnesses" of things, which account for all things and their interrelations—which is to say: for *the world*. To say that they *account for* everything is to say that they are the ἀρχαί—the principles—of everything. The whatnesses are the πρώταιἀρχαί, the first and ultimate principles. They are the principles of everything—which means not only of things, but also of the counterpart of things, understanding. The principles are at work

not only in things, but also in our understanding. They at once make things intelligible, and cause understanding to *be*. From the viewpoint of the ἀρχαί, the world and understanding are counterparts of each other, expressing the double being-at-work of the ἀρχαί. The fact that Plato and Aristotle called these ἀρχαί interchangeably "εἶδη" and "νοητά" reflects not only the priority of the ἀρχή, but also its peculiar doubleness. Its being at once a νοητόν and an εἶδος is exactly reflected in the correspondence between understanding and the world. "Understanding" is the *noetic* expression of the ἀρχαί; "the world" is the *eidetic* expression of the ἀρχαί.

It is, then, these ἀρχαί, the "whatnesses" of things, through which things are at all intelligible and through which understanding is at all possible, which are our familiar grounds. In the fall into perplexity it is these whatnesses that we lose. And when we say that it is our understanding that slips away, that we come to no longer understand anything, we mean that we come to no longer understand the whatnesses of things, through which alone we at all understand.

The whatnesses of things are, of course, not the only kind of "grounds". One tends to think, e.g., of what are called "efficient causes"—in terms, that is of "conditions" (necessary or sufficient) and "results". These are also grounds of certain kinds. For us moderns, it has become more and more customary to focus our attention on these whenever something has become a "problem" for us. But *by what*—we should want to ask—are we *guided* when we attempt to determine these efficient causes and conditions? How do we *know* to what we should turn in order to make what has become problematic once again understandable? The turn to these is a turn to something *determinate*, and it must therefore be guided *by something*. But what could give such guidance, if not the whatness of that which has become problematic? Without a knowledge—however non-thematic—of this, how could we know that the thing in question can affect and be affected by other things of just these determinate sorts? Thus an understanding of the whatnesses of things is necessarily presupposed by the specification of all relations of cause and effect, condition and result. But if we do in that case continue to have this understanding of the whatness of that which has become problematic, then no true perplexity results, since we are guided easily and swiftly enough to those conditions which render the thing once again non-problematic. As long as those bearings which provide such guidance remain, we do not fall into perplexity because, though something has become problematic, we are pointed immediately to the way out of the problem. Perplexity is what it is precisely because it involves the coming to be *without* any such bearings. Since, therefore, any specification of the relation of cause-

effect, condition-result, is only intelligible—is in fact only possible—provided the whatness of the thing in question remains unaffected—i.e. continues to be “understood” (however non-thematically) and continues to guide any assignation of an efficient cause—it is not *these* grounds—efficient causes—which are involved in the fall into perplexity; it is rather the whatnesses of things—i.e. the “bearings” themselves. The assignation of efficient causality must presuppose, for its bearings, an understanding of the whatness of what has become a problem. But in the fall into perplexity—into “un-understanding”—it is precisely this that we no longer have.

There is yet another problem having to do with this ability of ours to *refer* what has become problematic to something else. It concerns this *referability in general*. An examination of this will make us see more clearly the utterly radical nature of the fall into perplexity.

When we do lose our “understanding” of something (i.e., of its whatness), we *suppose* that we continue to understand other things—in fact, things at large. And indeed, the loss of “understanding” of the particular things compels us to *turn* to other things (i.e., to other whatnesses) which we *suppose* we understand—to *refer* it to these in order to “locate” what has ceased to be *simply* “understood”, in order to retrieve our understanding of what has become a problem, to become once again “at home” with it, to render it once again familiar. What has become *un-understood* thus reveals, in its *un-understandability*, that it is not something isolated, but has *essential, intrinsic* connexions with other things. This is, of course, something we always “knew”, though it is perhaps only now for the first time that we take notice of it at all. And neither is that to which we now turn something isolated; this too presents itself rather as essentially interconnected with other things, including the problematic whatness we have just referred to it. In thus turning to these other things, we find ourselves referred ever beyond them. We come to see that the difficulty with which we began is far more extensive than we had at first seen. We discover the irony of our search: that each advance presents to us yet further obstacles. We come to see that the self-disclosure of the *philosophic problem* is a revealing that it is always hiding much more than it lets us see.

A certain whatness becomes a problem. If, in its referral to yet another whatness to “locate” it and therefore retrieve our original “understanding” of it, the movement of thinking stopped there, no perplexity would result, since the original whatness would *immediately* cease to be a problem, for we would have now *immediately* “located” it (much like quickly finding something we had mislaid)—and this by virtue of the fact that it does always contain (even when it has become problematic)

these “pointings” to other such whatnesses.

This fact, that it does contain such “pointings” to other whatnesses, might appear to land us back in the very same difficulty which we discovered in our examination of efficient causality—viz., that insofar as the now problematic thing does continue to give us “bearings”, we must still *understand* it, with the result that no perplexity occurs. Here, however, the matter is somewhat different: We lose our understanding of something—e.g., what it means to be a “human being”. Though we continue to “know” that a human being is an animal, and therefore that the whatness of human being is connected with the whatness of animal, we are now aware that we do not know *how* they are connected, that we do not understand the precise nature of that connexion (indeed, this connexion, having now become problematic, for the first time becomes *thematic* for us), though we had always thought we did understand this.

This brings directly to mind two notable cases in the dialogues of this incipient self-awareness: At *Meno* 80b, Meno confesses that he had always thought he knew what human excellence is, but now can’t answer this question. At *Sophist* 244a, the Stranger says that we had all along thought we knew what being (τὸν) is, but are now perplexed (ἠπορήκαμεν) about it. This event in the *Sophist* is especially pertinent here. We, as well as the Stranger and Theaetetus, are brought to this insight that we are indeed perplexed about being—and are brought therewith to the initial thematization of being in the first place—by the inner logic of the movement of thinking from the initial questionability of “the sophist” through the questionability of inquiry (Ζητέσις), of art (Τέχνη), of the image-making art, of falsehood (ψεῦδος), and thence of non-being (μὴδν). Though they become perplexed about the whatness of being, their *turn* to just this bespeaks their recognition of the *centrality* of the whatness of being, its central connexion with *everything* they have been talking about from the beginning. This is clear not only from an examination of the whole series of themes that led them to the thematization of being, but also from the immediate context of 244a, as well as from what follows this passage: The immediate context has to do with the claim of certain of the physical philosophers that the only things that *are* are the “hot” and the “cold”; and the Stranger’s and Theaetetus’ insight is that they do not explain what the “*are*” means. Their own thematic discussion of this question (244b sq.) leads them through an uncovering of the five “greatest classes” (μέγιστα γένη), to the subsequent discussion which turns out to be a mirror image of the whole “preliminary” discussion, moving in reverse order from being to non-being (256d sq.) to falsehood (259d sq.) to the image-making art (264c sq.) to τέχνη in general (264d sq.). Apart from other

things, this signifies that the connexions among these things (i.e., among these whatnesses), though having become problematic, have been preserved. The movement of referral of one theme (therefore: one whatness) to the next exhibits, at each step, the incipient recognition of the non-independent—i.e., problematic—character of what they take as their theme. The fact that the discussion subsequent to their thematic treatment of being and the greatest classes is a mirror-image of the “preliminary” discussion which leads to the thematization of being, signifies among other things that, with the articulation of the problem of being (with the disclosure of its ultimately aporetic “structure”), there is nowhere else to move to, but back to where they had begun, and along the very same path they had then taken.

Thus these connexions among the whatnesses, as well as our recognition of them, remain, though they are now no longer simply “understood”. The whatnesses and their interconnectednesses remain what they were—and yet, on the side of *understanding*, they have now revealed themselves to be indeed strange: the whatnesses show themselves to be non-independent, and their interconnectednesses too are opened up—which is to say: they too reveal themselves to be problematic. In fact, even what it means to be a “connectedness”, a “connexion”, is no longer understood, is problematic.

So: even though the now problematic whatness can be immediately and automatically referred to one or more other whatnesses, it does not thereby immediately cease to be a problem. This movement of referral to yet ever other whatnesses is of necessity *continuous*, and it is just *this* which constitutes the fall into perplexity. The inherent logic of this movement of referral forces one constantly onward, until one reaches the point where, though referral still remains imperative, there is nothing left to which that referral can be made. The incipient aporia of a certain whatness necessitates its referral to ever other whatnesses, *co-implicating from the outset all whatnesses in its own un-understandability*. The movement of referral (as exhibited paradigmatically in the *Sophist*) reveals the thorough-going interconnectedness of all whatnesses. The fact that, in the attempt to retrieve the understandability of the original whatness, this referral moves through ever other whatnesses until one reaches a *dead end which is at once a demand to proceed*, shows that it is this thorough-going interconnectedness of *all* whatnesses that is involved in the fall into perplexity: there is *nothing left* to which to turn. The fall into perplexity is radical and total: it is the loss of *all* bearings, *all* grounds.

This can be formulated in yet another way: In the language of *Republic* 510b-511c, something becomes a problem—i.e. it reveals itself to be non-independent and therefore to be merely a *ὑπόθεσις*, to have been so all

along, whereas we had always up to now (however non-thematically) understood it to be *in-se-et-per-se* understandable and therefore as itself an *ἀρχή*, as its *own* *ἀρχή*, as independent, as in and of itself intelligible. The self-revelation of its non-independence, of its merely “hypothetical” character, is at once its self-referral to something else (another whatness), something which at first appears in and of itself intelligible and therefore truly independent and ultimately grounding. But because the whatness with which we began has become problematic, even though it refers itself to—and therefore directs our attention to—another whatness for its grounding, its *connexion* with this second whatness also at once becomes un-understood. This renders the second whatness problematic (since it is now unclear *how* it is connected with the first), and leads thinking beyond *it* to locate that which would ground the connexion between the first and the second whatness. In other words, the second whatness, which had, when we were first referred to it, appeared to be in and of itself intelligible, as its *own* *ἀρχή* now *too* reveals itself to be merely “hypothetical” and to require a ground, an *ἀρχή*. This necessarily leads us beyond itself to locate that which would ground *it* as well as the first whatness. But that to which we are now referred (some third whatness) presents the same difficulty, revealing its at first apparently *archaic* character to be in truth merely *hypothetical*, and therefore revealing the need to go beyond it to *its* ground. And so on.

This matter is somewhat complex and involves more than merely a successive transformation of *ἀρχαί* into *ὑποθέσεις*. The connexions remain what they were—it’s just that they *now* disclose themselves as unclear, as no longer understood. The *ἀρχαί* remain as *ἀρχαί* relative to what they ground, but they now show themselves to be questionable, problematic, opaque. I.e., they now show themselves to be problematic both *in themselves* and *as grounds*, as to *how* they ground. Though they remain as grounds relative to what they ground, they now show themselves to be *non-ultimate*, for they now show themselves to *not* be in and of themselves intelligible. They point, that is, beyond themselves to the demand for that which would make them intelligible. This is not merely the transformation of *ἀρχαί* into *ὑποθέσεις*—indeed, it is our mere *supposition* (*ὑπόθεσις*) of these *ἀρχαί* which is now in suspension; perhaps it would be more accurate to say that the *ἀρχαί*—the whatnesses—reveal themselves to be *ὑποκείμενα*: they “lie under” or “behind” what they ground, but not in an *ultimate* way, not with ultimate and absolute intelligibility—and this is so not only with regard to the relationship of whatnesses to “things”, but also with regard to the interconnexions among the whatnesses themselves. It is in their *ultimacy* as grounds (i.e. their ultimate clarity and intelligibility as

grounds) that they fall away, revealing, point to, the *demand* for ultimacy; revealing, that is, the ultimate unclarity (and hence ultimate groundlessness) beneath them. It is this which was meant by saying that the fall into perplexity is the loss of one's grounds.

Let us see how far we have come: We have seen that in the fall into perplexity all things, all connexions, remain, but as "*un-understood*". We no longer *understand* them—"what" they are. All whatnesses "*slip away*" from us, and this is what is meant by saying that we lose all our grounds. We have seen that, in the incipient *aporia* of a single whatness, all whatnesses are, from the outset, implicated—and that this is necessary, since otherwise the incipient problem would, in its referral to other whatnesses, immediately cease to be a problem. The fall into perplexity is radical and total: we no longer understand anything. In view of the thorough-going interconnectedness of all whatnesses it can be said that in the fall into perplexity we lose our understanding of the world as a whole. Though the world continues to be "*there*", and retains its typicality it is lost on the side of understanding. Earlier, I characterized "*the world*" as a thorough-going interconnectedness of all whatnesses, and therefore as a comprehensive, all-encompassing context of meaning and understanding—a characterization completely consistent with the ancient understanding of the world as a κόσμος an ordered whole; a characterization, in fact, by which along this concept of the world as a κόσμος becomes at all intelligible, since "*order*" bespeaks thorough-going interconnectedness—which is, in turn, intelligible only by reference to the whatnesses of things.

In the fall into perplexity, then, we lose—on the side of understanding—the world as a whole, the whole context or framework of meaning which ordinarily guides our understanding, from which our understanding ordinarily takes its bearings; we lose that horizon of understanding within which we ordinarily always move. We lose, in fact, the very *context*-character of this context. There is, on the side of understanding, a thorough-going dis-integration of the interconnectedness of all whatnesses: things cease to have an *understanding*-reference to other things. There is a breakdown in the integratedness of the whole; there is, on the side of understanding, a breakdown of the whole itself. The whole ceases, for understanding, to be a whole. This context, normally thoroughly "*closed*", self-contained, thoroughly integrated, now "*opens up*", *dis-integrates*. As a consequence of this, things cease, on the side of understanding, to be "*parts*" (μέρη) of a "*whole*", but "*break up*" into a mere maniness. Things go on just as before, but now they are accompanied by our consciousness of not knowing how or why they do so. This is the essence of the fall into perplexity.

The wholeness of the whole necessarily bespeaks *limits*, *determinations*, in terms both of ultimate encompassedness or enclosedness, and systematically ordered parts within. In the fall into perplexity these are lost. The internal interconnectednesses of parts are lost in the sense that they become unclear; the ultimate encompassedness is lost in the sense that that self-referral of a problematic whatness to ever other whatnesses to resolve itself, finally terminates in yet a further demand to proceed, opening up thereby the "*outer boundaries*" of the whole, and revealing thereby its ultimate non-independence. The whole (τὸ ὅλον) reverts to a mere "*All*" (τὸ πᾶν), in which the interconnectednesses of τὰ πᾶντα and the ultimate understandability of both τὰ πᾶντα and τὸ πᾶν are absent. In the fall into perplexity, the whole become *indeterminate*, *un-limited*, *limit-less*, and this "*openness*" is indeed revealed as something ultimate—and this in two senses: 1. externally, for the whole is not itself part of a larger whole to which it could then be referred, and thereby located and retrieved; and 2. internally, because of the breakdown and collapse of the "*bounds*" separating the ἀρχαί from each other—and therefore the breakdown and opening up of the ἀρχαί themselves. In this way does the "*breakdown*" of the whole amount to the disclosure of its ultimate non-independence and ultimate openness. The *aporetic* truth of the whole thus disclosed turns out to be the least expectable of things: the whole is—aporetically—the ἀπειρον.

And here one must ask in passing: Is this what Anaximander discovered? viz., the *ultimacy* of this openness, boundlessness (ἀπειρον); that it is in its *ultimacy* that the "*limit-less*" is the "*ground*" of everything—that *ultimately* boundlessness (τὸ ἀπειρον) underlies everything.

In this way, then, the incipient *aporia* of a single whatness produces an opening up of the whole. This whatness now presents itself to us as something strange, and moreover as something we cannot simply refer to something else (some other whatness) to obviate its strangeness. The interconnectednesses of all whatnesses having themselves now become problematic, we can no longer depend upon that self-referral of one whatness to others, which would ordinarily in such circumstances serve to resolve the incipient difficulty, thereby preserving and sustaining the holistic character of the whole. This self-referral, though it remains (the interconnectednesses remain, though *as* problematic), now shows itself to lead nowhere, to go no distance at all toward resolving the problem of that whatness about which we first became perplexed. Our recognition that all whatnesses have been co-implicated from the outset in the *aporia* of a single one, now forces us to remain with, to remain before, this particular whatness, to keep it before us—though we no longer understand it—and thus sustain the tension of

knowing and not knowing in which it involves us. It presents itself to us indeed as a tension, and in two senses: First of all, it presents itself both as what it is, and yet as something unclear; for it is precisely *what-it-is* that has now become unclear. That is one tension. The second tension relates more obviously to us, to understanding: although we remain in contact with this whatness, this contact has become distantiated or stretched—opened up without breaking entirely—so that we now “have” this whatness—have it *before* us—and yet do not know *what* it is that we now have.

In thus suddenly becoming for the first time problematic, this whatness at once becomes for the first time *thematic* for us. In becoming problematic, it for the first time awakens our thematic interest⁵ in itself. It is in its first becoming something problematic, strange, that our attention is first called to this whatness. We behold this whatness now in an attitude of θεωρεῖν ἀπορητικόν—a posture of beholding aporetically. Inseparably embodies in this beholding are the *arche*’s having become *thematic*, as well as its having become *problematic*. This is to say that this beholding embodies the afore-mentioned tension between knowing and not knowing. And that is to say that the posture of θεωρεῖν ἀπορητικόν—of beholding aporetically—is the *self-formation of a question*.

A question, so formed, and embodying in this way the tension between knowing and not knowing, is not simply some sort of “thought-object”, over and against us; it is far rather a state of tension *within* us. As a tension, the question calls upon us, awakens us, sets thinking in motion. A question, so formed, constitutes itself as a *demand*. It is this demand that the question makes upon us, which prompted me at the outset to characterize wonder as a “thinking ἀπόρως”—without passage; as a “movement without transition”. The question sets thinking in motion, but this motion is “without passage”: Here thinking is unable to proceed, and yet unable to rest. The question is a dynamic tension within us—in other words, a demand upon us.

The being of a question is not primarily its verbalization or linguistic formulation. These merely *express* it. The being of a question resides in that noetic disposition or posture of θεωρεῖν ἀπορητικόν, embodying the tension between knowing and not knowing. This posture itself is identical with the question, for it is one with the *self-formation of the question*.

Here I am helped by Hans-Georg Gadamer. Let me quote you a passage from the second part of *Truth and Method*. He says:

“Any speech which intends to open up or lay bare something, requires forcing open this very thing through the question. To question means to bring into the open. What is questioned must be put in suspension or brought into unsettledness.

Every (*genuine*) question only acquires its sense by passing through such unsettledness, in which it becomes an *open* question. Every *genuine* question demands this openness.” (*Wahrheit und Methode*, p. 345)

It is, as I’ve argued, a certain whatness that comes to be *in question*—which is to say that this noetic posture I am describing is a relationship which understanding has to this whatness. I have already described our aporetic relationship to this whatness as a thematic “having” which is at once a not knowing *what* it is that we have. This indicates that the question that so forms itself is not just any question. Insofar as it is the whatness of something which has become a problem for us—the whatness itself, which we cannot refer to anything else to resolve the problem—the question which so forms itself must express just this relationship; insofar as our noetic attitude of θεωρεῖν ἀπορητικόν arises in the already indicated manner, just precisely from a whatness become problematic, it must be just this whatness itself which is reflected in the self-formation of the question.

The whatnesses of things *are* the whatnesses of things precisely because they are the ἀρχαί in whose terms all things are understood; all things are referable to, are subsumable under, these whatnesses for their understanding—i.e., not only all particulars and all relations among particulars, but indeed the whole matrix of interconnectednesses which we call our “world”. Hence an encounter with a strange or unfamiliar object immediately forms in us the question, “What is it?”, whose resolution involves the referral of the object to the appropriate whatnesses. But where do we stand when these whatnesses themselves have become strange?

A whatness becomes strange, problematic. Thinking is set in motion, yet this thinking is ἀπόρως—without passage. We are unable to rest, and yet unable to proceed. We have this whatness now before us—though we are now aware that we do not any longer know *what* it is that we have before us—*what* this whatness is. The prethematic familiarity which we had always had with this whatness now gives way to a posture of θεωρεῖν ἀπορητικόν. Having this whatness before me in this way, and unable to move anywhere, I must ask it—as I would have to ask of any strange object—*what it is*. The question which thus forms itself in our noetic posture of θεωρεῖν ἀπορητικόν is not just any question. The fall into perplexity is the self-formation of the “What is” question.

III

My argument has centered around a certain claim about the beginning of philosophy, and has attempted to show genetically and epagogically that the beginning of philosophy—or, what is the same thing, the fall into

perplexity—is the self-formation of the “What is” question. My claim for the unique priority of just *this* question receives textual corroboration from two sources: 1. That this question in particular is ultimate—i.e. that it is not resolvable into some other question—is supported by *Phaedo* 96 where Socrates, in criticizing the other ways of asking after the real (viz., the διὰ τί and the ὅ), argues that these other ways are, and *must* be, reducible to the τί ἐστι. 2. That this question in particular is most central is supported by Aristotle who, in *Topics* I, 9, 103b23, places the τί ἐστι at the top of the list of the categories, and who in *Metaphysics* Z, 1028a15, says that, though τὸ ὄν is spoken of in many ways, the *primary* sense is τὸ τί ἐστι. In other words, the primacy and centrality of the τί ἐστι in the category-articulation of τὸ ὄν indicates the primacy and centrality of this question as a *question* with respect to all the other possible questions which the categories express. This is to say: any and all questions which can be asked to anything are ultimately and necessarily referable to the primary and central question, the “What is” question.

I have already had occasion to refer to a certain passage from Hans-Georg Gadamer’s *Truth and Method*, where he indicates that the being of something first comes to light in the questioning about it—that it is the *question* which first *reveals* the *being* of the thing questioned. I think I’m saying the very same thing when I say that, in becoming problematic for us, a whatness becomes for the first time *thematic* as well, and that these two moments are inseparable. To say that the being of what is questioned is first revealed in the question about it, must necessarily mean that the “being” of what is questioned is *itself an aporia*—that its revelation is the revelation of an *aporia*; for otherwise the question would not be, or would cease to be, a question. But if the being in question is revealed to be aporetic, that means that *what* it is is in question. And if it is the “what-it-is” that is revealed in the question to be an *aporia*, then the question which performs this revelation can only be the “What is” question.

* * *

The argument of this lecture has revolved around a single point. That point is the point of connexion between wonder and the “what is” question. We have not moved beyond that point. We have only opened it up to show that the “What is” question is formed in a noetic attitude of “beholding aporetically” (θεωρεῖν ἀπορητικόν). In modern times it is above all Heidegger who reminds us of this. He speaks of wonder, the ἀρχή of philosophy, as that “disposition” (*Stimmung*) in which we are brought before the being of beings. (*Was ist das—die Philosophie?*, Pp. 25-27) What does this mean: to be brought before the

being of beings? It is, of course, to be brought beyond the beings themselves to that which both transcends them and yet *is* their being—that which, while not being one of them, makes them *be* what they are. But “what they are” is not something univocal—not a mere homogeneity (for if it were, then heterogeneity would be completely unaccountable)—and if we understand this phrase, “the being of beings”, accordingly, we can say that wonder—the fall into perplexity—brings us before the being of each being, the “what is” of each being, its εἶδος.

This transcendence which wonder brings about does not result in the collapse of all the beings into a mere homogeneous unity in which all difference disappears. In being brought before the being of beings, wonder brings us before what is irreducibly an eidetic manifold, a *range* of whatnesses. Nor, in turn, is our transcendence of these whatnesses (we are, after all, now *before* them—i.e., *beyond* them) simply the move to some *thing* beyond them; this move is far rather from these whatnesses taken as *independent*, to these same whatnesses taken as no longer *merely independent*; it is the move to their ultimate *non-independence*.⁶ Wonder is the ἀρχή of philosophy because it is that radical and all-encompassing transcendence which is at once both a *thematization* and a *revelation* of the essentially aporetic innerness of the being that is thematized. It is in just this way that, in transcending the whatnesses of things, wonder both reveals them and opens them up as ultimate problems. In transcending the whatnesses of things, wonder *becomes* the “What is” question.

* * *

This insight marks, at least in its explicit formulation, if not the traditionally-held historical beginning of philosophy, then certainly the Socratic beginning of philosophy—for we know the “What is” question to be the Socratic question. The discovery of the ultimacy and centrality of just this question seems to have been the original achievement of Socrates, at least as he is presented in Plato’s dialogues. A study of the significance of this achievement may not bear upon the historical question—except perhaps to show that philosophy is *essentially Socratic*, and that the Socratic beginning of philosophy is therefore the same as the essential beginning of philosophy. I have, of course, indicated this already, but only in broad outline. To work it out in detail is the task for which this lecture has been only a prologue.

* * *

Let me conclude by way of an epilogue: I began this lecture with a likely story. My point, of course, was to try to persuade you how barren and ultimately uninterest-

ing such an account *must* be, since it cannot help but destroy just what it sets out to understand. But I now notice that, in my attempt to place before you the *essential* origin of philosophy, I too have had to give you a sort of reconstruction. And I therefore cannot end, without at least posing to myself the question, whether *this too* has not been a likely story.

Thank you.

Notes

1. I will indicate here in passing that Aristotle links the two participles under the single article: ὁ δὲ ἀπορῶν καὶ θαυμάζων οἶται ἄγνοεῖν.
2. This is seen clearly if we contrast it with someone like Meno. Meno's torpor, his immobility though it may astonish him is *anything but* wonder.
3. In the *Theaetetus* (155d1) Socrates in fact refers to τῷ θαυμάζειν (i.e., an activity) as a πάθος.
4. As Socrates says at *Republic* II, 382d2-3: "... διὰ τὸ μὴ εἶδεναι, ὅπη τ' ἀληθὲς ἔχει περὶ τῶ παλαιῶν" ("... for we don't know where the truth about ancient things lies....").
5. This notion of "thematic interest" is taken from Husserl. Cf. *Erfahrung und Urteil*, §20 et passim.
6. Cf. *Republic* VI, 510b sq.; *Phaedo* 72e sq.

A Hero and a Statesman

Douglas Allanbrook

Some years ago, together with a friend of mine, I climbed a high mountain in southern Italy. It was wild and savage country, though in the valley under the mountain there were several bleak and stony villages and on the other side of the mountain was the sea and the ancient town of Elea, city of Parmenides and Zeno. It's country fit only for goats and there was evidence of those interesting and destructive beasts everywhere. We followed goat-tracks all morning as we zig-zagged up the mountain. We got to the top around noon: it was a spare and flinty summit. The sun was clear, hot, and disinterested. On one side of the view was the glittering Mediterranean, cut by the curve of the coast from the cape of Palinurus to the citadel of Elea. On the other side were the heart-breaking ranges of the desolate province of Lucania. Everything was harsh and clear.

We soon noticed at a distance of perhaps a quarter of a mile a solitary figure seated on a large boulder. As we got nearer to him we could see that he was a goat-herd and there were lots of his charges cropping away at whatever poor sustenance they could uncover at this barren height. He was old and rudely dressed. He moved not a muscle as we approached; though he was looking at us his eyes were careful not to show a flicker of expression. We were embarrassed and, wanting some contact with this solitary figure, we took out cigarettes, offered him one and took each of us one ourselves. He lit his and we lit ours and then we asked about his goats

and about paths down the mountain. Still without a flicker of expression he looked at us and said "Voi siete quelli delle tasse" ("You're the people from the tax office"). The story ends here, since he said nothing more and was not interested in what we had to say and he went his way with his goats and we went our way back down the mountain.

If we are going to talk about politics, and cities, and the origins of a particular modern nation-state, great caution is necessary. The true story I just told is a political story. It has to do with property, taxes, and suspicion. There was a head tax on each of those goats, a tax imposed by the central bureaucracy of a modern nation-state. The goat-herd was a citizen of a nation-state, whatever that means. None of us in truth likes to pay taxes, though here we have an elaborate contractual dance within which we can legally quarrel about the amount and nature of our yearly incomes. Some years ago our leading literary critic wrote a bitter and lengthy attack on taxes, citizens, and contracts. Certainly any attempt to talk with that man on that mountain about contracts between citizens, about constitutions, about man as a political animal, about rights and duties, about his patriotism, about the exigencies of national armaments, would have been futile and unjust. All of us have in truth deep suspicions within us as to our relation with this many-headed entity, the state. Politics, in one very basic if low understanding, is a dirty business, and the aura of greatness and the talk of virtue and the marble monuments are only too often meant to gild the mouldy reality. If we pride ourselves on having a different relation to the state than the man on the mountain in the story, we must be perpetually careful about what we subscribe to as members of a body politic. We are in truth mem-

Douglas Allanbrook is tutor emeritus, St. John's College, Annapolis. *A Hero and a Statesman* was originally delivered as a formal lecture at St. John's College, Annapolis, in 1966.

bers of a greater republic. If that is not so in some manner, however tenuous and slight, the words of the King of Brobdingnag to his gullible visitor, Gulliver, are perennially true: "I cannot but conclude the Bulk of your Natives, to be the most pernicious Race of little odious Vermin that Nature ever suffered to crawl upon the Surface of the Earth." There's a true story from the Spanish Civil War of an anarchist peasant, illiterate and desperately poor, who stood on a hill watching the destruction and bombardment of the great port city of Malaga. He reveled in the destruction as being the destruction of pride and wealth. He looked forward to a cleaner world of freedom and brotherhood.

These opening remarks are meant to serve as a backdrop both to the general discussion of politics inherent in what will be set forth and to the specific events, the making of the modern nation-state of Italy, which will be the main matter of the essay. I should like to frame the subject more precisely now by giving you in a rough translation passages from two works of imagination which have specifically to do with Italy and generally to do with certain pregnant events in the coming-to-be of any modern state. The first passage is the opening of Stendhal's novel *The Charterhouse of Parma*.

On the 15th of May, 1796, General Bonaparte made his entry into Milan at the head of that young army which had just passed the bridge of Lodi and had just made the world aware of the fact that after the course of so many centuries Caesar and Alexander had a successor. The incredible feats of bravery and genius which Italy witnessed in these few months aroused a people that had been asleep: eight days before the arrival of the French, the people of Milan saw in them only a collection of barbarians and brigands, always in the habit of fleeing before the troops of his imperial Highness, the Emperor of Austria: at the least, that was what had been drilled into their heads three times a week by a little newspaper no larger than your hand, printed on dirty paper.

In the middle Ages the Republicans of Lombardy had given proof of a courage equal to that of the French, and because of this had seen their city entirely destroyed by the emperors of Germany. Since they had become faithful subjects [*fidèles sujets*] of the Emperor their main preoccupation was to letter sonnets on pink taffeta handkerchiefs on the occasion of the marriage of a girl who belonged to some noble or rich family. Two or three years after this great event in the life of the girl she would take an official companion, a young cavalier: often the name of the young man she had chosen would occupy an honorable place on the marriage contract. Often indeed he would be chosen by the family of the husband. There was an enormous difference between such paltry and effeminate doings and the deep emotions which the unexpected arrival of the French army aroused. Soon enough new and deeply felt ways came to the surface. The whole population realized on the 15th of May, 1796, that everything that they had respected up till then was manifestly ridiculous and even hateful. The departure of the last Austrian regiment marked the demise of old-fashioned ideas: it was now the fashion to live in the open; it was realized that to be happy after so many

centuries of pale sensations one had to love one's fatherland with a real love and to be on the lookout for heroic actions. One had been plunged into a black pit by the continual and jealous despotism of Charles the Fifth and Philip the Second: their statues were overturned and all of a sudden they all found themselves bathed in light. For the past fifty years, while the Encyclopedia of Voltaire had been flashing through France, the priests had been preaching to the good people of Milan that to learn to read or to learn anything of the ways of the world was hardly worth the trouble and that to pay ones tithes to the priest and to confess faithfully all of ones little sins was practically a guarantee of a post in paradise. To accomplish their task of enervating a people that formerly had been both so terrifying and so intelligent, Austria had sold them on the terms of a good bargain the privilege of not having to furnish recruits to its army.

The second passage is from the novel *The Leopard* (*Il Gattopardo*), written by a Sicilian, Giuseppe Tomasi, Prince of Lampedusa and Duke of Palma. The novel was published shortly after his death in 1957. The protagonist of the novel is the Prince of Salina, a figure drawn largely from the author's own grandfather. Most of the novel takes place in the years 1860 and 1861 in Sicily. These were the years in which Italy became a nation. Sicily played a peculiarly important part in this event. In the Spring of 1860, Garibaldi landed with his famous "thousand" at Marsala on the western coast of Sicily and in a few weeks had conquered the capital, Palermo. This was accomplished by a rare combination of sheer courage and good luck, and abetted by the venality of the troops opposing him. He then went on to conquer the rest of the southern kingdom of Naples. The details of this event will occupy us in great detail presently. The scene from the novel takes place shortly after the first and most famous general plebiscite that Italy has ever witnessed. The population of Sicily was asked to vote "yes" or "no" to the following proposition: "The Sicilian people desire to form an integral part of Italy one and indivisible under Victor Emmanuel as their constitutional King." Sicily was of course already conquered and her legal rulers in Naples were besieged by Victor Emmanuel. The results in the Prince's village of Donnafugata had been as follows: registered to vote 515; actually voted 512; voted "yes" 512; voted "no" 0 (zero). The Prince, a highly intelligent and large man who has done valuable work in astronomical calculations, is out hunting with his faithful follower, Don Ciccio. Don Ciccio is, among other things, the organist of the local church and as poor as poor can be, which is very poor in Sicily, where much of the population is often on the verge of starvation. The only other person you really need to know about is the mayor of the town. He is a "new" man, as they said at the time, a wealthy peasant who has profited enormously from the commotions of the past six months, whose fortune now equals or even surpasses that of the Prince. He is des-

tined to be a future member of the new Italian parliament. The Prince suddenly asks Don Ciccio the following question:

'And you, Don Ciccio, how did you vote on the famous day?' The poor man jumped; taken by surprise, in a moment in which his guard was down, he hesitated, not knowing what to reply.

The Prince took what was only surprise for fear, and was irritated. 'Well really, what are you afraid of? There's nothing here except us, the wind and the dogs'.

The list of witnesses was not a happy one, to tell the truth: the wind is a gossip, the Prince was certainly half Sicilian. The dogs were the only ones to be completely trusted and that only inasmuch as they were not equipped with a language. Don Ciccio pulled himself together, however, and his peasant shrewdness suggested to him the proper reply—that is, no reply. 'Excuse me, your Excellency, your question is fruitless. You know as well as I do that at Donnafugata everyone voted "yes."'

The author of the novel then traces the thought of the Prince as he thinks back over the past few weeks. Many humble people had come to him for guidance as to how to vote. He had told them all to vote 'yes'. Italy had been born on that day and that was that. Some evil fate must have been present, however. He could not dismiss this from his mind. At any rate the new country was born and one had to hope that it could live in the form it was cast in; any other solution would have been worse. He felt that the overly neat set of figures, 512 'yes', 0 for 'no', that the banal rhetoric of the election day speeches, had killed something or someone. Suddenly Don Ciccio gets to his feet:

He spoke in dialect and gesticulated, a poor puppet who was ridiculously right.

'I, your Excellency, voted "no." "No", a hundred times "no." I know what you told me: necessity, unity, opportunity. You're probably right: I don't know anything about politics. I leave those things to others. But Don Ciccio Tumeo is a "galantuomo", poor and miserable, with patches on the seat of his pants.' (and he whacked one of those neatly sewn patches to make his point more effective) 'and benefits I don't forget; and those pigs in the City Hall swallow my opinion, chew it up, and then defecate it in the form they want. I said "black" and they make me say "white." For once in my life that I could say what I thought that bloodsucker of a mayor annulled me, acted as if I didn't exist, as if I never had anything to do with anyone, I who am Don Francesco Tumeo La Manna son of Leonardo, organist of the Mother Church of Donnafugata' (he bit his finger to restrain himself).

At this point calm settled on the Prince who had finally solved his enigma: now he knew whom and what had been killed at Donnafugata and in a hundred other places in the course of that election day: a new-born babe had been killed: good faith and trust: the very creature that should have been taken care of, whose good health would have justified so many other stupid vandalisms already committed. The negative vote of Don Ciccio, fifty votes like it at Donnafugata, one hundred thousand no's in the whole kingdom, would not

have changed anything in the final result, they would have if anything made it more significant: and one would have avoided this black bile of the soul. Six months ago one heard a harsh despotic voice which said 'Do as I tell you or you will be beaten.' Now one had already the impression that this threat had been replaced by the soft words of a money-lender: 'But you signed yourself. Don't you see your signature? It's perfectly clear. You must do as we say, look at the contract: your will is equal to mine.'

As you recall, the first scene from Stendhal took place in the North, Milan, in 1796. The second passage was laid in the southernmost part of the South, in southern Sicily, in the very moment of the emergence of Italy as a state. Now certain geographical and historical facts must be presented at some length. Afterward the lives of the two men chiefly responsible for this unification will be discussed at some length. Without facts, events and characters, political discussion is without substance.

First geography. At the very least then Italy is a peninsula, hemmed in at the top by the encircling ring of the Alps and on the other sides by water, cut in two down the middle by the Appenines. But geography does not make a nation any more than a common language does. It has often been pointed out that the patriotism of the



Italians during most or nearly all of their history resembled that of the ancient Greeks. It was love of a single town or commune, not love of a country. To be sure, she had been quite homogeneous in religion from the time of Pope Gregory and there was a certain common culture and language as is clear from reading Dante and Machiavelli. Like the Greeks, the Italians were never united, except by foreign conquest, until the events which we are to trace took place. There is also obviously an enormous difference between Delphi and Rome, though the difference is more political than religious as far as the unity of the peninsula was concerned. Metternich's cynical definition of Italy as a "geographical expression" is not without an element of truth, as is usually the case with political statements which offend.

Except for the Po valley in the North, the country is poor and rocky and lacking in natural resources. Yet as all who have read Thucydides know such poverty can lead to resourcefulness and daring as well as to political backwardness and apathy. I can't see that any particular thing is to be explained by the geographical setting—though it is a setting within which events and politics are colored. The barrier of the Alps and the provinces of the Alps have often been disputed as to whether they are German or Slav. The state of Piedmont had its roots firmly in French speaking Savoy. Malta in the far south and Nice on the Western Riviera were always disputed territories. In one sense there has been an official language since the time of Dante. The spoken language has always varied enormously—to the extent that the dozen or so dialects are largely unintelligible outside their native districts. These dialects have their own literatures, just as the various regions preserve still, over a hundred years after unification, their own customs and ways of thinking. Up until the unification these various regions were politically divided with different traditions and systems of law, coinage, weights, and measures. One of the great annoyances of older Italy was the proliferation of customs barriers, set up not only between states but between cities and ancient communes. There were twenty-two customs barriers along the course of the Po river with all of the red tape and fuss that that implies. Such a state of affairs was disastrous for both agriculture and commerce.

In the Northwest corner of Italy lies the region of Piedmont. Since 1815 this state included the important port of Genoa and the island of Sardinia. The King of this state was generally called the King of Sardinia and his family was the oldest ruling family in Europe, the House of Savoy. The Province of Savoy was part of the state of Piedmont until 1860, when it was bargained away to Napoléon III as part of the price for his acknowledging and fighting for the new state of Italy. Turin, the capital of Piedmont, became the first capital of the new Italy. To

the east of Turin lies, in the middle of the great plain of Lombardy, the city of Milan. Lombardy was an Austrian province until 1859, when it was conquered by Piedmont. Still further to the east is Venice and its province. For countless centuries it had been an independent state, the "Serenissima Repubblica." After the Napoleonic period it became an Austrian province for seventy years, until in 1866 it became part of the new kingdom of Italy. On the South of the Po valley were the independent duchies of Modena and Parma. These were indirectly under the rule of Austria, Parma having been given as a kind of consolation prize to Napoleon's Austrian wife. To the east of these cities were the provinces of Emilia and Romagna, property of the Pope. This northern phalanx of cities and provinces was and is incomparably the richest part of the country. Milan, the greatest city of the North, became the commercial and artistic center of the new kingdom. South of the Appenines on the west lies Tuscany. It was a Grand Duchy with its capital at Florence. The Grand Duke was Austrian. South of Tuscany is Rome, the seat of the Pope. Rome was a smallish Baroque town surrounded by antiquities. It was the capital of the ghostly empire of the Church and the temporal States of the Church, a territory which stretched in a lazy arch up through Umbria and the Marches around into the Po valley, a crazy quilt of cities and provinces pieced together by the nephew of a Pope, Cesare Borgia, as may be recalled from reading Machiavelli. The Southern half of the peninsula, from sea to sea, plus the island of Sicily, constituted the ancient and long-suffering Kingdom of Naples, sometimes known as the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies. In the rest of Italy it had always been known simply as the *regno*, the kingdom. It was one of the last stands of the famous Bourbon family in European history and it fell to pieces in a few short months in 1860 and was incorporated into the new Kingdom of Italy. It was the largest and oldest political unit of the peninsula, having existed as a kingdom for a half a millennium. The differences between the Kingdom of Naples and the North were profound. Naples and Palermo were on a different layer of civilization from Turin, Milan, and Florence. This was a deeper difference than that to be found between Boston and New Orleans in, say, 1850. Most of the inhabitants of this kingdom lived in squalor and misery, buffeted by earthquakes and droughts, and constantly subject to malaria. The next-to-the-last bourbon king, Ferdinand, who died two years before the demise of his realm, kept up the trappings of a feudal system, feared ideas, and kept his subjects sealed off as best he could from agricultural and industrial trends current in the rest of Europe. Roads were non-existent in many huge regions of the "kingdom." There were recurring peasant revolts in this kingdom, especially in Sicily. These were not "modern" revolts

but sporadic upsurges of black violence, in which a village would go berserk and slaughter the priests, the lawyers, and the land-owners. The capital, Naples, was the largest city in Italy and the fourth city in Europe at this time, ranking in population after London, Paris, and St. Petersburg. It was a fatalistic city and its kings were not ambitious. Ferdinand had a certain mordant wit and used to characterize his ancient domains as "being bounded on four sides by water—on three sides by salt water and on the fourth by holy water." The Sicilians detested the Neapolitans and this fact became most important in the events leading up to the unification. Ferdinand was called King Bomb, "*Re Bomba*," by his subjects, because of the cruelty of his bombardments of the insurgent city of Messina in 1848. Enthusiasm of any kind was always suspect. One eager young lieutenant, who had fought with distinction in Sicily, begged to return to the conflict. King Ferdinand looked at him with incredulity and asked if once wasn't enough for him. The city of Naples had formerly been a proud center of learning. It was the home of philosophers, of Vico, Campanella, and Giordano Bruno. The Southern mind at its best is contemplative and abstract. The future lawyers of the new state were apt to be Southerners. There was a brief and high-minded revolution in 1799, sparked by the nobles and upperclass patriots. It was put down, assisted by Lord Nelson and the British fleet, with the utmost cruelty. The counter-revolution of the Bourbons was led by that bloody prince of the church, Cardinal Ruffo, who publicly hanged the outstanding men of the realm in a square which is today known as the "Square of the Martyrs." The common people, the rabble, took little interest in these upper class doings and were more content with their old kings and superstitious and conniving priests. In defence of the Bourbons it must be noted that they always kept food prices low, were not ambitious, preserved the lazy corrupt ways of the kingdom, and developed a kind of kinship in both speech and practice that the common people could understand. Certainly the Kingdom of Italy after 1860 governed the region worse than the Bourbons and in a more despicable manner. A huge army of occupation was necessary, all of the provinces were given over to bandits, food was taxed, conscription was introduced, and all local industry was effectively destroyed by the North. They were given no autonomy and their ancient customs of law were brushed aside. As part of a "liberal" policy the lands of the church were broken up and sold to the most venal of speculators. The common peasant found himself ground down and reduced to more abject misery than before. The principal alleviation to this desperate state of affairs was supplied by the escape valve of emigration to America and by the money which returned from the New World in a steady stream. This fru-

gal, and passionate people had to turn aside from their native land to find any decency or daily bread. In the thirty or forty years before 1860 the Bourbons had forced into exile or had imprisoned in the foulest of medieval fortresses the intelligent and independent minded among the Neapolitans. The presence either in exile or in prison of the most enlightened segment of the subjects of the kingdom had a powerful influence on the liberal opinions of the rest of Europe.

The States of the Pope were in as parlous a condition as the Kingdom of Naples. There had been a brief flirtation with a constitution when Pius IX came to power and all of Italy had been swept with admiration and wonder at the idea of a liberal pope. "Who ever heard of a liberal pope", commented Metternich. His predecessor, Gregory XVI, had been one of the worst and most reactionary rulers imaginable. Pius's liberal leanings were soon swept away. In the midst of the strange revolutionary fervor of 1848 a brief and glorious Republic was set up for three months in Rome, led by the visionary Republican Mazzini, and defended with desperate courage by the only hero of modern times, Garibaldi. This republic was soon put down by foreign troops, the army of the republican-emperor of the French, Napoleon III, and the full force of clerical repression was loosed on these unhappy states. Every vestige of representative government was swept away, any institutions protecting person and property against absolute power were abolished. The free press was abolished and spies, both clerical and lay, were unleashed. Prisons and galleys were filled with those who had worked for the Republic. The Vicar of God on earth retained his power only by the presence of foreign troops and mercenaries. Rome, the very name, Rome, had always been present in the mythology and aspirations of a certain few people in the peninsula. After the brief and glorious defence of its Republic in 1848, it became a symbol of a united state of Italy. For better or worse in 1870 it was made the capital of the new Kingdom when it was captured, in a brief and inglorious campaign, by the soldiers of Victor Emmanuel. Pius IX, with great ill-grace, retired within the walls of the Vatican, a self-styled prisoner, and the first Vatican council wrestled with the problems of his "infallibility."

Tuscany to the north was ruled by a pliable and kindly old gentleman, the Grand Duke Leopold, who was not disliked by his people and was restored to power after the troubles in 1848. He wanted to make his rule popular and expressed disapproval of the Papal tyranny. In some ways the State of Tuscany was a model to Europe. Its legal and penal systems were exemplary, its universities were good and it was a tolerant place. Without the power of Austria, however, the Duke would not have been there. In the great northern provinces of Lombardy

and Venice the Austrians after 1848 had learned the better part of wisdom and ruled with an admirably efficient and even honest bureaucracy, backed by a highly trained army and often excellent generals. They abolished many of the trade barriers, took the first census of population, and collected taxes justly. No other region of Italy was on any comparable level.

At the time of the conquest of the city of Naples by Garibaldi there was wild popular enthusiasm. One of Garibaldi's slogans and cries was always "Hurrah for Italy and Victor Emmanuel!" A Neapolitan was observed by an Englishman present in the city at the time to cry out these words "Hurrah for Italy!" and then to turn to his neighbor and ask "But what is this Italy they're talking about? Is she the daughter of the King?" Even if one knew what Italy was and that it existed, a noted and intelligent Italian minister after the unification commented in a famous phrase that Italy was made and now one has to make Italians. In our own country, 1860 marks the beginning of the deepest and bloodiest travail and the questions of what the country was, if it was one, and who could be a citizen, was settled, if indeed settled, by oceans of blood. At least in Italy there was not much blood shed, but the question remained open. What one thing is referred to when the phrases 'it went to war', 'it is a good place', 'it has a destiny' are employed, the 'it' referring to a nation? The question has to be answered sometime, and the avoidance of the question and the lack of good sense in the answer to the question has been the cause of untold suffering and horror. In 1922 the nation of Italy was taken over by a ruthless and pretentious journalist. With the help of his bands of thugs he ruled and mismanaged the country until the disasters of international war put an end to him and his immoral and farcical rule twenty-three years later. Nowadays there are hosts of new "nations", and the problem of understanding and defining state and citizen and good rule is discouraging and imperative.

We shall perhaps come to some better understanding if we look backwards now in greater detail to the origins of the Italian state. After all, it came into being not under the aegis of any historical necessity but through the actions and decisions and thought of certain extraordinary men. Two men's actions were largely responsible for the creation of this state of Italy, Count Camillo Cavour and Giuseppe Garibaldi. One of them, Cavour, is generally considered the most consummate statesman of the century, and the other, Garibaldi, is one of the only genuine heroes I know of. The unification of the whole peninsula would have been impossible without both of them, yet there was no meeting of minds between them. They profoundly disliked and distrusted each other. This misunderstanding is not only personal, though it is that,

but is deeply involved in the nature of political action and thought. It is not going to describe much to say one was on the left and the other on the right. They both supported the king in their own ways and neither man was an extremist, though both were capable of extreme and even rash actions.

There were two main parties at the time of the unification: we must understand them to understand these two men, even though Garibaldi's power rested on deeper things than party planks and Cavour exhibited a mastery of power that no party could explain. One party was known as "the party of action", it was a popular, democratic party, republican in its origins, with lines left open to a more radical left. The other party, known as "liberal" (though today in this country it would perhaps be known as "conservative") believed in a constitution with very limited suffrage. It deeply and at times fatally mistrusted popular movements. It was a party interested in commerce, banks, landlords, and free institutions. Cavour once said that the liberal method was good because "free institutions tend to make people richer." Cavour said to the parliament of Piedmont in March 1850 "You will see, gentlemen, how reforms carried out in time, instead of weakening authority, reinforce it; instead of precipitating revolution, they prevent it."

The popular party in Italy had its prophet and its theorizer in Giuseppe Mazzini. He spent his life as a revolutionary agitator and as an inspiration to revolutionary youth. He was exiled from Piedmont in 1831, lived in France and Switzerland until he was exiled from those countries. He spent the greater part of his days in England, which he dearly loved. He was interested not in the mere political unification of Italy but in its resurrection. This resurrection was to be accomplished through the exertions of ordinary people. It was not to be brought about by any appeal to self-interest. The problem was moral more than political. One should put no trust in Kings and alliances. Redemption should come by sacrifice. America was no answer to him. He wrote that it is "the embodiment, if compared to our ideal, of the philosophy of mere rights: the collective thought is forgotten: the educational mission of the state overlooked. It is the negative, individualistic, materialistic school." His great cry was "*Dio e popolo*"—"God and the People." As was quite natural for such a religious visionary, he detested the Pope, and for three glorious months in 1848 he ruled the Roman Republic. His method was continual insurrection. Though he was under sentence of death for most of his life, he made many trips surreptitiously back to Italy. Many courageous people followed him and lost their lives in one abortive uprising after another. His ideas went further than Italy; he envisioned a world of popular nations, rising in moral fervor as the fulfillment

of God's Providence. Though he was a mild and lonely man he became one of the most feared and hated men of Europe. In the earlier years after 1814-15, when the old and repressive orders were re-established in the Peninsula after the Napoleonic years, his program was the only thinkable one for ardent souls. While it may have been Utopian to think that the people would rise on their own initiative, putting aside selfishness, in those years nothing else was thinkable, since the Peninsula was governed by strongly entrenched governments who would suffer no talk whatsoever of constitutional reform. As the years of the unification came round, many of his most faithful followers left him and became more practical. He found that the people rose only for selfish and non-national reasons and he was bitterly disillusioned. "I had thought to evoke the soul of Italy, but all I find before me is its corpse." The country was "rotten with materialism and egoism." He must have known at the end that his own intransigence was somewhat to blame. He had been capable of saying "I feel ready to stand before God as pure and confident as any believer in the world." He also confessed that he loved men at a distance but that contact with them made him hate them. It goes without saying that he and Cavour detested each other. He accused Cavour of "substituting Machiavelli for Dante" and Cavour, before 1860, had found his talk of national unity "silly twaddle." Cavour was perfectly content to have Mazzini plotting and leading ineffectual uprisings, as it only proved to the rest of Europe and to his conservative friends that he, Cavour, was the bulwark of order against such disturbing and revolutionary upsets. After his death the King, when Italy was safely one, would personally unveil a statue to this Republican prophet, a man who had been under sentence of death throughout the unification. Every third street in Italy is named after him and quite properly so. Mazzini had a function which is more properly religious than political, the visionary and mystic function of filling people's heads with hopes that are incapable of realization. These hopes are dangerous, because they unleash power. They define "nationality" and put a flame under it. The popular party, however much it may have abandoned Mazzini, never abandoned the idea of one nation, democratic and popular. If the nation was not to be under Mazzini's god it would be under Victor Emmanuel, of all people. Garibaldi, who was originally a disciple of Mazzini, broke with him. The two men never trusted each other from the moment Garibaldi pledged his allegiance to Victor Emmanuel. Garibaldi himself was loved by the people as few men have ever been loved, but he was perfectly prepared to impose freedom on them if they didn't want it. Garibaldi was often thought of as a lion: not only was he courageous and honest, he could be ferocious and dictatorial.

He was little troubled by ideas and he had lots of red hair on both the top and the front of his head. Mazzini in England once asked an English friend of his "Have you ever seen a lion at the Zoological Gardens? Did you ever look closely at the face of a lion?" "Yes, it's without detail." "Is it not a foolish face? Isn't it the face of Garibaldi?"

The radical popular party is to be understood as falling somewhere between Mazzini and Garibaldi. Mazzini preached the gospel of insurgent nationalism based not on self interest but on duty and God. Garibaldi preached, if indeed it were preaching, Italy and Victor Emmanuel. He aroused enormous popular sympathy by the sheer force of his courage and honesty. As a general of irregular troops he was singularly gifted. He also, much to the annoyance of many, showed on occasion great good sense.

The Liberal party of Cavour was not interested in National Unity or any religion that was connected with it. They abhorred popular movements and believed in cautious Constitutions and economic progress. Their innovations were concerned with new and better administration, mechanical progress, trade, and utilitarianism. Their model was England and its Parliament. They were of course anti-clerical; Cavour once defined Christianity as orthodox utilitarianism. Behind both parties lie revolutionary theory and practice.

We, a revolutionary country, have perhaps grown used to the Declaration of Independence, but it was and may be viewed as a shocking and radical document. The events that followed its publication were also shocking. The Revolution in America and later in France not only showed that rulers could be overturned; they proceeded to demonstrate that it was proper and justifiable to do so. What had been for centuries regarded by most sober and prudent men as the ultimate civil and moral crime, rebellion, was now a thinkable foundation for society and morality. Hand in hand with these revolutions went the doctrine of "the sovereignty of the people" and of the popular will. Any discussion and any political action that has to do with modern "nations" must of necessity deal with these powers and the ideas inherent in them. The varying uses of the word "democracy" are as manifold and protean as the fish of the sea, and the word "the people" is as varied and multifold in its political usages as "democracy". At the time of the two Revolutions the doctrines of equality and brotherhood had the negative function of denying any group of human beings the right by either blood inheritance, privilege, tradition or ancient conquest to lord it over the rights of other human beings. The immediate application of these "inalienable rights" was to deny the rights of kings and priests and hereditary aristocracy. The positive affirmation of these rights is held by many political thinkers to be impossible: they

are indeed almost impossible of definition. Talk about them easily degenerates into slogans. The serious discussion of them occupies most of our political thought. Mazzini, as you recall, felt that any talk of "rights" of "the people" had to be transformed into talk about "duties" of people, and he submitted that America was an example of the philosophy of mere rights and that it overlooked the educational mission of the state. Poor Don Ciccio, in the Sicilian story I told you earlier, was deeply wounded as a loyal man that his opinion, registered on a plebiscite meant to express the general will of the people, was discounted and falsified. As a defender of the old orders of Kingship and fealty he felt an obligation to repay benefits received with a "no" on his ballot that was to be registered by the new orders. If the new orders had not the courage or common sense to register protest, good faith was tarnished and non-existent and there was nothing left for any man of honor to respect or support. The new orders of the Liberal party of Cavour never inspired trust. This liberal party accepted the facts of the two revolutions and tempered them so as to make them reasonable. They detested the Pope and the Priests and wished no part of them in the running of the government. A Constitution was for them a way of keeping the king and protecting themselves from him simultaneously. It also served to protect them, who were generally middle class people, from what they already regarded as the masses and from the license to which such people were subject. They were at the beginning confident that money and progress and opportunities for educated people could substitute for good faith and trust. It should perhaps be stated more fairly that they had faith and trust in what seemed possible and profitable. The definition of politics as the art of the possible has always titillated the pragmatic and the unwary. Let us now turn to the life and doings of the head of the Liberal Party, that master of the possible, Cavour. Without him there would have been no nation. He died a few months after the creation of the nation and without him the nation faltered.

Count Camillo di Cavour was born in 1810, the younger son of a Piedmontese nobleman. He entered into politics as a minister in 1850 at the age of 40. He became prime minister in 1852 and was almost continuously in power until his death in 1861 at the age of 51. He was a shrewd and witty conversationalist with blond hair and blue eyes, portly in later life. Except in matters of dress, in which he was proverbially careless, he liked order. As was the case with Garibaldi, his command of Italian was imperfect. This was perfectly understandable, as the Italian language was, in general, unacceptable in the French-speaking society of Piedmont. All of his travels in the early years were to France and England. He was much better versed in French literature and English

history than in things Italian. As a younger son in a strictly regimented and backward society his education was not the same as that of his elder brother, who received training in Latin and Greek and acquired a taste for metaphysics. Young Camillo was sent to the Military Academy, where he became a prize student in mathematics, a subject which he always prized as forming habits of precise thought. He graduated first in his class from the Military Academy and was commissioned a lieutenant in the Corps of Engineers. Liberal ideas from abroad soon fascinated him and he was rash enough to write several essays. His family was shocked. His father had a post as the Royal chief of police and suggested a kind of semi-exile for him. He was assigned to garrison duty in the Alps. There he studied English, read the works of Adam Smith and Jeremy Bentham, and followed with keen interest the workings of the English government. All of his life he felt more at home in things English and more at ease with Englishmen than with Italians.

At 25 he resigned his army commission and for the next 15 years managed the family estates (at Liri). There he became famous as a bold innovator, introducing new accounting methods, crop-rotation, machinery for making beet-sugar, livestock-breeding, etc. During these years he also traveled extensively in England and France, observing factories and talking to politicians. In his rule over Piedmont he showed the same spirit as he had in running his farm: he took over an old-fashioned and ill-functioning unit and modernized it with the best available means. He was not at all interested in model farms, only in farms that worked and showed a profit. His family in all his earlier years found him a perverse and strange creature, often charming but interested in bizarre subjects such as political economy. His two maiden aunts could not imagine what he did when he went to Paris, since all he was interested in was politics and revolution and he never went to the theater. It is perfectly true that in later years he only went to the theater to sleep.

On one of his trips to England he inspected gasworks, factories, hospitals, and prisons. He is said not to have objected to the use of the treadmill in itself in the prisons he visited, but he did think that unfruitful labor was demoralizing. Useful labor with a small gain would reform the convict. On his Parisian trips he gambled extensively. Indeed, gambling was a lifelong passion of his, which he controlled with difficulty, though he was often a clever and fortunate speculator. When he was prime minister he could be audacious to the point of folly, yet on the whole he was prudent and sensible.

In 1845, though still a private man, he was one of the most unpopular men in the whole of the stuffy and provincial little city of Turin. Charles Albert, the King, a bigoted and querulous monarch, would often inquire

of Cavour's father as to the health of his son Camillo and of his extraordinary visits to hospitals and prisons. When talking to other persons the king would describe Cavour as the most dangerous person in the kingdom. He was so hated by the conservatives that he was privately asked to retire from his job as treasurer of an Orphan Asylum: his connection with it set all of higher society against the charity. He was equally detested by the radicals. One day when he asked leave to speak at an Agricultural association which the radicals controlled, most of the members rose and left the building. His older brother always disagreed with his politics. When Camillo was in power he always voted against him, though they lived together in harmony until the end in the family palace in Turin.

In 1847 Cavour founded a newspaper in Turin to which he gave the name of *Il Risorgimento* (the resurgence). It was this newspaper's name which became the official title of the whole Italian movement towards unification. He claimed that the experience he gained running a newspaper was as valuable to him in his later work as the knowledge of mathematics.

Time was running short for the despotic and priest-ridden government of the king, Charles Albert. In many parts of Italy the yoke of foreign despotism was being preached against. The independent kingdom of Piedmont was more backward in its internal structure than that arch-devil of tyrannies, imperial Austria. Mystical fellows imagined a united Italy with the Pope at its head; it seemed a kind of miracle when an amiable and popular Cardinal, Feretti, was elected Pope as Pius IX and began to act like a Liberal. Cavour now for the first time showed his qualities of prudent daring and right timing. A public meeting of leading journalists and citizens was called to discuss petitions that the people of Genoa had urged. The Genoese, a lively and commercial people, were fed up with the slowness of things in the capital city of Turin and urged, among other things, the expulsion of the Jesuits, who were regarded as the worst enemies of a liberal Pope. Cavour announced to the consternation of all extremists at this meeting that what the Genoese demanded was not too large but too small. While the king remained an absolute prince he could not grant or would not consent to one thing or the other. The government itself was not one thing or the other. It had lost the authority of an autocracy and had not gained the power of any expression of the popular will. What was wanted was not any particular reform but a constitution which would retain both the monarch and the people. Cavour felt from the first to the last of his life that this form of government was the only one possible in a country such as Piedmont, a government which combined freedom with order. One of his principal political axioms was always "no state of siege."

The Moderates thought Cavour had gone out of his mind, and the Radicals were furious, because they felt a Constitution would pull the teeth out of any revolution. They had no intention of being stuck with some imported English abomination such as a House of Lords. Cavour was given the nickname of "Milord" Risorgimento.

The first two months of 1848 showed the accurate timing of Cavour. Constitutions became the order of the day. All over Europe revolution broke out. Every puny princeling in Italy seized upon that valuable device, which serves such good purpose in times of trouble and interregnum, a constitution. Charles Albert of Savoy, King of Sardinia and Piedmont, finally broke down after desperate family councils, threats of abdication in favor of his son Victor Emmanuel, and long hours of fasts and religious vigils. He had in former years secretly engaged himself always to govern the country as he found it governed, which promise had been deviously gotten from him by Prince Metternich of Austria. A high ecclesiastic now convinced him that it would be a greater sin to abandon his people in their need than to break a promise he could no longer maintain. Though in general his penmanship was of the highest quality, the signature "Carlo Alberto" written at the bottom of the Constitution of 1848 betrays a trembling hand. The Piedmontese Constitution of 1848 remained in force as the Statute of the new state of Italy for one hundred years until the year of our Lord, 1948. In the hands of Cavour this Constitution was a pliable document. It remained so in the hands of lesser men. Right of public assembly and right to freedom of expression in the press were granted but in practice were not inviolate even under Cavour. Ministers were technically responsible to the king and not to the parliament, though often in practice this meant a parliamentary government based on the cabinet. It was flexible in either direction: everything depended on the character of the King and his ministers. "The king nominates and dismisses his ministers" was in another article. He was not obliged to follow their advice; there were only vague generalities concerning ministerial responsibilities. Nothing definite was stated as to legislative initiative. The king alone had the executive power. Generals and admirals were appointed directly by him as Ministers of the Army and the Navy. By their oath of allegiance they were responsible only to him.

The Constitution was received among scenes of high excitement and enthusiasm. Groups sang strophes of a new hymn called "Brothers of Italy". Cavour, doubtless remembering the reception his constitutional proposals had received earlier, whispered to his neighbor, "We are so many dogs."

Shortly after this, while Austria itself was in the throes of revolution, the city of Milan liberated itself in five

heroic days of barricades, the only truly popular insurrection in the whole history of the "Risorgimento." There was great agitation in Turin as to whether to go and help Milan. The English informed Carlo Alberto that the least act of aggression would place his throne in danger, but Cavour sensed the right course at that moment. The real danger to the dynasty was not to act. Non-action would most probably lead to Republican overthrow of the throne. In addition, a student of England's internal affairs, such as Cavour, could not conceive that England would allow a war in defense of an unpopular tyranny, to hinder the development of a more liberal state. Cavour wrote the most impassioned article of his life, the gist of which was that audacity was prudence and temerity wisdom and that the zero hour of the dynasty was at hand. Charles Albert invaded Lombardy with his army, entered Milan, and won a small victory. He passed a messy and disturbing year between Milan and Turin, as the Republicans of Lombardy and the Piedmontese could come to no political agreement and the king was muddle-headed. The Army was incompetent. The Austrians struck back a year later and utterly defeated the Piedmontese. Charles Albert was a broken man. He went into exile leaving the kingdom to his son, Victor Emmanuel, who had the courage to refuse the lenient terms Austria offered to him if he would repudiate the Constitution.

Piedmont was in a dreadful state for two years. The good sense of Cavour finally prevailed; he became a member of the government in 1850. When he was furiously assailed in Parliament as being a lover of the English, he with great calm pointed out that it was the only country that had survived the storms of revolution. He told the assembly and preached constantly the doctrine that reforms carried out in time reinforced authority and, instead of precipitating revolution, prevented it. By 1852 he was in complete control. The King disliked him but was constantly outmaneuvered and had the sense to see that no-one else could do the job. Banks were established to provide credit, tariffs were reduced. Exports and imports trebled. The railroad network included half the mileage of Italy by 1859 and was a great help in the military mobilization of that period. A tunnel was bored through the Alps, bringing Paris to within a day's journey. The foundations of an armament industry were established, a canal was built which irrigated large sections of the country. International banks invested heavily. Cavour cared for the country as he had so successfully cared for his own estates.

In 1852 Cavour accomplished what he felt to be his political masterpiece. It amounted to the destruction of a party system. Secretly, behind the backs of his colleagues and of the Prime Minister whom he wished to supplant, he made an alliance with an unscrupulous poli-

tician of the left-center, Ratazzi. This man was later, after Cavour's death, a most lamentably inept Prime Minister. The idea was to wed the right-center and the left-center so as to effectively eliminate the extremes. This would make for moderation and the golden mean in everything. It worked only too well with Cavour. It meant later that power was based on alliances within an amorphous government majority. All shades of opinion could be comprehended. Instead of resigning, ministers could try to change their policy and build another compromise. Anyone who didn't play the game was out of the picture. Any effective opposition was castrated. These are the politics of an opportunist who is both enormously sensitive to the shifts of opinion and who attempts to encompass all of them. Parties, in such a system, tend to become clusters of clients around their patrons. Such things as platforms and principles are constantly adjusted and have little meaning. It leaves government perilously free from opposition and criticism; there seldom will be any alternative government with a different policy and composition. In Italy no strongly articulated parties were to appear until the times of Socialism and Fascism in the twentieth century.

This system was praised by men as eminent as Croce. In Cavour's hands it worked like a house-a-fire until 1860: Piedmont flourished and became the center of Italian and European interest. Cavour was temporarily out of power after his first "marriage" with the left; but a ministerial crisis soon brought him back as Prime Minister, where he remained almost without interruption until his death. The retiring Prime Minister had written to a friend of his concerning Cavour: "the other one, whom you know, is diabolically active, and fit in body and soul, in addition, he enjoys it so much." Soon afterward charges of corruption were brought against the ministry in the matter of elections. Ratazzi, Cavour's ally on the left, admitted that constituencies were led to believe that it would be to their advantage to return the ministerial candidate. In the course of the debate, Cavour got up and not only acknowledged the "interference" but said that without it constitutional government would collapse in Piedmont. I quote him in this context "If you must resort to extraordinary means, then adopt them as energetically as possible, so that the grandeur you aim at may make up for the hateful methods you employ, and so that your government will not appear ridiculous as well as odious." Corruption in politics is in this way legitimized, and public and private life have separate codes of morals.

The art of the possible is a definition that perhaps applies more precisely to diplomacy than to politics. In the field of diplomacy Cavour is generally regarded as a master. Let us examine the givens of his diplomatic problems and the aims and ends of his policy. The State

of Piedmont had been artificially put on its feet by the victorious powers of Europe after the Napoleonic Wars. It was designed as a buffer state that would separate the spheres of Austria and France. As such, neither Austria or France would suffer it to cease to exist. It was to the benefit of those two great powers to see to it that it fell not too extensively under the influence of either power. This gave a possibility of audacity of maneuver to the state of Piedmont that Cavour was well aware of. The other important fact was England. England was jealous of France and vice versa. They aimed at preserving a balance of powers on the continent. If Cavour were to gain the aid of France and Napoleon III in conquering and defeating the Austrians in the North so as to expand Piedmont into a kingdom of Northern Italy there was the genuine risk of not being able to get rid of France once one had finished using them. The counterweight of England might be used at such a juncture. This possibility was always another cornerstone in Cavour's structure. These were the everpresent possibilities of the power balance, the givens of the situation to be manipulated. Nothing would have happened all by itself, though many things happened by chance. Cavour was a great improviser and gambler and used to say that no one was a politician who made firm plans for next week. Nevertheless he had a shrewd insight always into the odds of the game and into the givens of the gamble.

In 1853, feeling reasonably secure at home, and having overhauled the internal structure of Piedmont and reorganized the army, he voluntarily entered Piedmont as a belligerent on the side of France and England in the Crimean War, a war fought for the most devious reasons against the Russian Empire. Public opinion in Piedmont was incensed at this war. The Russians expressed what is certainly the truth when they stated that they found the entrance of Piedmont into the war to be "extraordinarily gratuitous." King Victor Emmanuel, a rough and ready corporal in character, brought up among military men and interested mainly in horses, and ladies, was delighted with the idea and had said that if he couldn't go he'd be glad to send his brother. The Army Corps that was sent to Russia, while not covering itself with glory, won a tidy battle; the other nations admired the order of its encampments and the composure and constancy with which it endured the rigors of an epidemic of cholera that killed over 1200 of its soldiers. At the news of the victory the people of Piedmont became enthusiastic, and the King was disappointed when the war ended. Cavour entered this war in order to put his little state on the map and to gain the privilege of sitting in at the peace conference that concluded the war. The war had cost a great deal and the national debt soared. Cavour spent a careful two months at the peace conference. He unofficially

called the attention of French and English dignitaries to the corruptions and injustices of both the Papal and the Austrian rule. The conference ended officially. The next day, however, at an unexpected extra meeting, Europe suddenly found itself talking about Italy and the necessity of something being done about Vienna and Rome. No one said anything in writing, but Cavour had managed to launch a kind of cold war in which nothing was strictly delimited. It was a risky business. Austria was a great power and had been mortally offended. France and England, almost without realizing it, made semi-official statements of sympathy to Piedmont. This newly emerging concept, a possible kingdom of Italy, was made a European concern.

The next move was to get an army into Italy that would have the power of destroying Austria in its provinces of Lombardy and Venice, and, having destroyed those armies, would then hand over to Piedmont the area conquered. This Cavour proceeded to do by enlisting single-handedly and in a most secretive manner the help of Napoleon III, emperor of the French. Napoleon III was a vainglorious dictator-emperor, a nephew of the great Napoleon, a former conspirator and socialist, a dreamer who had the ways and manners of a second-rate waiter in a fancy restaurant. Filled with ideas of the rights of nationalities, he was an anti-papist married to a pious and powerful woman, a former socialist who depended on the Church party in his own country. He is perhaps the only dictator who was dedicated to giving more freedom to his own people and actually did so. He led his country to disaster at the end, namely foreign invasion and defeat. As opposed to Napoleon I and Hitler, this dictator had no fire in his guts.

Cavour met with this devious and mercurial man secretly at a small town called Plombières, and there made a pact the full details of which are not known. What does seem to have been bargained for was the cession to Piedmont of Lombardy and Bologna and the granting to Napoleon of the ancestral province of the King of Piedmont, Savoy and the city and region of Nice, the birthplace of Garibaldi. This pact was the acme of secret diplomacy entered into privately by two men without consultation with their respective countries. It was left to Cavour to deliberately provoke an incident which would give a legitimate cause of war between Austria and Piedmont, at which point Napoleon III, against the wishes of the majority of his subjects, would enter Italy at the head of his army. It is difficult to know what honesty would imply in such a man as Napoleon III. In Cavour's case it is certainly true that he did not mention that he had more in mind than the Austrian provinces. He was fomenting unrest in Parma, Modena, Bologna, and the large province of Tuscany. It is not at all clear

what kind of eventual political settlement Cavour had in mind for all of these possible provinces. He was playing at possibilities; a federation of provinces may have been all he had in mind, though certainly such a federation was to be headed by him and not the Pope. The official "lives of the Saints and founding fathers", which are always draped on men after a nation has been founded, obscure these facts of actual policy. Neither Napoleon III or Cavour had the slightest idea that Victor Emmanuel would shortly be King of all Italy. Neither of them wanted such a result. Napoleon III was obliged to the Pope, and no one at the moment took Garibaldi seriously.

Napoleon III, after his secret pact, began to prepare opinion in France and Europe for his coming intervention. At the same time he began in every way to try to squirm out of it. He had been in his youth enough of a revolutionary to know of the passions his intervention would arouse among Italian Liberals and Radicals. He, the defender of the Pope, was to aid the most violently anti-clerical nation in Europe. In addition there was the furious fact of Cavour. He used as much ingenuity to get out of the trap as Cavour did in trying to keep him in. The stupidity of the Austrians saved Cavour's game at this moment: they rose to his bait and needlessly sent an ultimatum to Turin at the very moment when England and the other powers were about to accept a scheme for the demobilization of the three great powers. Cavour, who had been in a state of almost hysterical tension for days, rubbed his hands in glee and war was quickly declared.

The Austrian Army vacillated, giving time for the French to arrive; and the forces of France and Piedmont defeated the Austrians at the Battle of Solferino. Parma, Modena, Bologna, and Tuscany threw over their rulers, proclaimed their independence, and instituted governments, the heads of which were all Cavour's men. Now Napoleon III did something that is often called an act of perfidy. It was not. The Italians, after Solferino, expected to surge onto Venice and drive Austria from the northern plain. Napoleon, after the battle, had had enough. He had never really accepted his own actions. He saw that he had exacerbated sensibilities both in France, in Europe, and within himself. He visited the battlefield the morning after. The sight of thousands of corpses caused him to vomit. He quickly arranged a peace treaty with the Emperor of Austria, returning everything to its original rulers except for Lombardy and Parma, which reverted to Piedmont. Napoleon gained nothing. Cavour was humiliated and furious. The Radicals regarded the treaty as the destruction of his infamous methods of diplomacy and immoral alliances. He lost his temper to the extent of calling his king an unmentionable name to the King's face, and he flounced out of office leaving

Napoleon holding the bag. The stigma of treachery descended upon the Emperor of the French; Cavour saved for himself the reputation of an outraged patriot. Garibaldi said the fairest thing after Solferino: "Do not forget the gratitude we owe to Napoleon III, and to the French Army, so many of whose valiant sons have been killed or maimed for the cause of Italy."

Everything worked out well for Cavour however, as the revolted provinces of Tuscany, Bologna, and Modena remained in the hands of his men. No one bothered to enforce the return of their older rulers. Cavour was soon in correspondence with Napoleon on this matter. He did, however, insist that Napoleon be given Savoy and Nice. He was back in power soon enough when a cataclysmic event occurred which overturned all calculations. Garibaldi with a thousand men conquered Sicily, and moved on to overturn the entire kingdom of Naples, all of this with the intention of moving all the way to Rome and proclaiming there a united kingdom of Italy with Victor Emmanuel as King. He had already proclaimed himself dictator and fully intended to make a present of the South to the King of Piedmont.

This startling man, Giuseppe Garibaldi, was born in Nice on the 4th of July, 1807. He was 53 at the time of his finest achievement, the overthrow of the Kingdom of Naples. He died in 1882 at the age of 75. When he visited England in 1864 popular enthusiasm reached such heights that the government was preoccupied. President Lincoln offered him the command of a northern army in 1864. Garibaldi considered himself an American citizen for a great part of his life.

It would be hardly correct to talk about the upbringing of Garibaldi; it hits the mark more to simply say that he grew up, the son of a simple sailor in the small port city of Nice. His father earned the family's living with his boat. He was the captain of a small craft that coasted along the Riviera from Nice to Genoa and occasionally as far as Barcelona in the other direction. His mother at the beginning thought she would like her son to be a priest, as it was one sure way of avoiding his entrance into military service. A priest who was a family friend was entrusted with preparing the boy for seminary. He had absolutely no success and Garibaldi detested the Church with genuine fervor all of his life. A retired military gentleman had much more success with the boy and was most happy with his pupil. No one could ever teach him grammar or syntax, as was gloriously evident in all of his later public utterances; but Garibaldi committed to memory and impressed on his soul enormous amounts of Roman history, whole sections of the "Divine Comedy," and entire pages of certain novels of Voltaire. He had a splendid boyhood around the port, was a famous swimmer. At the age of thirteen ran away from home

with two friends on a fishing boat borrowed for the occasion. At the age of fifteen he began signing on as a sailor, voyaging over all the Mediterranean and the Black Sea and to the Orient. Navigation was difficult in those days; he became and remained all of his life an expert mate and captain. He also had his first taste of sea fights, as pirates were a constant menace in those days. At the age of 26 he had been on the sea for eleven years and was the quintessence of what the Italians call *simpatico*: handsome, healthy, open, strong, enthusiastic, and completely honest. He was first mate on a ship bound for the Black Sea and the Orient at this time. Twelve extraordinary men were on that ship, crazy men, visionary men. They were followers of the revolutionary socialist Saint-Simon and were led by an actor with a large voice and extravagant gestures who had been on the boards at the Comédie Française. The French police had grown unhappy with this group and they were emigrating to freer lands. Garibaldi was entranced with the actor; for the first time in his life he had to do with a man who was an "intellectual," a man with a whole bag full of theories and visions and new religions. The religion was an exultant potpourri of Temples of Theology and Industry, of the Woman as a Messiah, etc. One distinction the actor made remained perpetually in Garibaldi's soul for the rest of his life. This was the distinction between a soldier and a hero. A soldier, according to the actor whose name was Barault, was "he who defends his own country or attacks a foreign country; in the first action he is pious, in the second unjust." The Hero, on the other hand, is "he who making himself a citizen of the world takes as his homeland Humanity and offers his sword and his blood to whatsoever people there be that are fighting against tyranny." These words from the mouth of the tawdry and rhetorical visionary became in the actions of Garibaldi's life a force that destroyed a corrupt and ancient tyranny, the Kingdom of Naples, and that led Garibaldi to deeds of valor in both the New and the Old Worlds. He was, in the terms of the above distinction, a hero and not a soldier. His patriotism was directed to all peoples. Many were puzzled when, at the end of his life, a great and revered Italian hero afflicted with crippling arthritis, he went to France in 1870 and fought against the Germans one of the few successful campaigns of that dismal war. Subtle minds, diplomats, and statesmen never could believe he meant what he said. Victor Hugo, in the sad days of the defeat of France, rose and called the attention of the French Assembly to the fact that Garibaldi was the only military leader who had not suffered defeat. He said that "no one rose to defend this land of France, which has so many times taken in its hands the cause of civilization: not one king, not one nation, but one man. . . ." One of the most prevalent sins of the cultivated

and worldly mind consists in mistrust of fervor and simplicity. Statesmen realize they must deal with such phenomena, which are always popular, but it is a rare statesman who can bring himself to believe that a simple and good man means what he says when he says it out loud and in public repeatedly all of his life. The bitterest pill of all for the adept statesmen is when the simple and heroic man exhibits plain horse-sense in the midst of a difficult and complex political situation. We must also be on guard that our good taste and sense of literary style and syntax do not stand in the way and prevent us from sensing the truth. Garibaldi, in his memoirs, writes of the vessel on which he made this voyage as "not being the vehicle charged with exchanging the products of one country with those of another, but as being the winged messenger that carried the Word of the Lord and the Sword of the Archangel."

Soon afterward he met with a believer-member of Mazzini's revolutionary association, "Giovane Italia," and heard for the first time the words *Patria* and *Italia* combined and was told that it was Mazzini the armed prophet who employed such words. Young Garibaldi was soon enough at Marseilles searching out the disciple of the faith. We know little of this first encounter between Garibaldi and Mazzini; they both remained silent in later years concerning it, perhaps because of the deep mistrust and pettiness which fogs all of their later connection. At any rate, Garibaldi was baptized into the new faith and took the solemn oath "invoking on my head the wrath of God, the hatred of men, and the reputation for infamy if I ever betray in all or in part my oath." The master told the new disciple that "if we throw out a spark of live fire, Italy will be a volcano." Garibaldi declared himself ready to be the spark; he was soon given money and a mission. This mission was to circulate along the whole Ligurian coast (the Italian Riviera) signing people up for the movement in preparation for an uprising that would be sparked by Mazzini's invasion of the North from Switzerland. He soon had thousands of signatures, since his honesty and directness were irresistible. The headquarters at Marseilles now directed him to enlist in the Piedmontese navy in order to infiltrate the conspiracy among the enlisted men. He enlisted in 1833. The naval records described him as having "reddish hair and eyebrows, broad forehead, aquiline nose, round face and chin, healthy natural color." The Piedmontese navy had the peculiar habit of requiring their recruits to adopt a pseudonym. Garibaldi chose the name "Cleombroto." The recruiting officer must have been embarrassed to inscribe on his records the name of the ancient Spartan hero, the brother of Leonidas and the father of Pausanias. Garibaldi very successfully organized a revolutionary cell on board his first ship and was transferred to another vessel. He had dis-

tributed lots of money and enthusiasm. He managed to obtain a medical shore-leave at Genoa on the days that were fixed for the insurrection, but on shore the insurrection never took place. Mazzini never left Switzerland, the plot was discovered. Garibaldi fled back to Marseilles with a sentence of death proclaimed against him by the government of Piedmont. This was in 1834. Back in Marseilles there was a great fracas of accusations and bickerings, which always accompany conspiracies, and Garibaldi had his first frustrations and disillusionments with Mazzini. Later in life he used to characterize the "disciple" as an expert in "Revolutions by Correspondence." He began shipping out again as a first mate. In 1835 he left Europe for South America. He remained there for thirteen years and learned the techniques of guerilla warfare that were to shake the Old World later. He found himself already noted among the Italian exiles in Rio when he landed. He was much feted by the revolutionaries and Mazzinians of Brazil. He soon wearied of talk and became a kind of pirate chief, with the official title of head of the Navy of the insurgent Republic of Rio Grand of the South, which had proclaimed its independence from the empire of Brasil. The government of this republic was mostly on horseback, an association of wildly independent cowboys and ranch owners. The details of this period are complicated. Garibaldi fought on land and sea, on horseback, in all kinds of weather: he developed techniques of living off the land and of lightning attacks; he was captured and tortured; he married a woman of the people, who was a constant companion in these wars and who bore children in the midst of campaigns. During the last eight years in South America he was the principal sustainer of the republic of Uruguay, defending Montevideo against the dictator of Argentina, Rosas. In the last years he formed an Italian Legion; for the first time the uniform became a red shirt. In all of these wild years, on horseback and in the middle of insurrections, there are two important things to be noted: he would never fight unless he had an official document either from the roving Republic of the Southern Rio Grande or from the Republic at Montevideo, and he never made any money from his fighting. At the time of his glory in Montevideo as defender of the Republic, his wife, the loyal Anita, had to beg candles from the neighbors. When he left South America in 1848 he must have been the only General who ever left that troubled continent without funds or a carefully cherished bank account in Switzerland.

The glorious news of the 1848 revolution in the motherland rendered Garibaldi and the Italian Legion frantic with impatience to return to Italy before it was too late. A public subscription among the Italians at Montevideo finally raised the money for a boat. Garibaldi and sixty-

three of the Italian legion set sail and finally disembarked at Nice in June of 1848. There was wild enthusiasm for him as his feats of valor in South America had made him famous to an extent that he had hardly realized himself. He almost immediately offered his sword to Charles Albert, the head of the government which had condemned him to death thirteen years earlier. Charles Albert hemmed and hawed and finally sent him up to Turin to the Ministry of War. There he found great distrust, and it was suggested that he go and help the Venetians, who were in revolt against Austria, and become a kind of pirate chief. He was disgusted and went to Milan, where the popular revolution received him with enthusiasm and made him General. He and Mazzini met, but the tables were turned from fifteen years earlier; Mazzini enrolled in Garibaldi's troops as a standard bearer. The Piedmontese army collapsed under the assault of the Austrian's. Only Garibaldi fought on. He called for volunteers and carried on a guerilla warfare with success and courage as long as humanly feasible.

In the opening months of 1849 Rome revolted. The Pope fled to the protection of the King of Naples. Garibaldi and Mazzini both arrived, and Mazzini for three splendid months was the effectual ruler, the chief of the "triumvirs" of the newly proclaimed Roman Republic—three months in which he acquitted himself with charity, tolerance, and even political skill. The days of this Republic were numbered. Napoleon III had no intention of tolerating its existence. The first French Army which attacked Rome was roundly defeated and repulsed by Garibaldi. New troops arrived and all the might and modern armament of France was brought to the siege of Rome. Garibaldi and his men defended the city from the heights above the Vatican with furious courage and spirit. Garibaldi was finally forced to retreat. He himself never considered that the Roman Republic had ceased to exist: he always regarded himself as its general. He now began a retreat with what remained of his troops across the length and breadth of half the peninsula, eluding the combined forces of the Kingdom of Naples, the Duke of Tuscany, and the Emperor of Austria. This retreat has become the epic of the Italian nation and is a modern "anabasis." The whole month of July he twisted and turned and confused the generals of the enemy. Food and ammunition became scarcer and scarcer. Many of the troops melted away. He had said to the volunteers that left Rome with him the following words, words which he had pronounced in the midst of St. Peter's square, under the Egyptian obelisk that is the central ornament of that great and noble space:

Fortune, who betrays us today, will smile on us tomorrow. I am going out from Rome. Let those who wish to continue the war against the stranger, come with me. I offer neither

pay, nor quarters, nor provisions; I offer hunger, thirst, forced marches, battles, and death. Let him who loves his country in his heart and not with his lips only, follow me.

By the 31st of July he had arrived at the tiny and independent Republic of San Marino. There he finally dismissed his troops. With a few followers he fled to the coast of the Adriatic and tried to gain Venice, which was still holding out against the Austrians. In all of this retreat he was accompanied by his loyal wife, Anita. She was pregnant and near to death in these days; he finally left her corpse in a peasant's cabin in the marshes near Ravenna, and fled to escape the Austrian police. He made his way across the Appenines. With the help of a clandestine organization he proceeded from the coast of Tuscany to a port near Genoa, Porto Venere. The government of Piedmont quite typically was afraid to allow him on their soil; his travels continued until finally he arrived in New York in July, 1850. An enormous welcome had been prepared for him, which he declined. He lived as a private citizen on Staten Island, hunting and fishing with his friends there and earning his living in a candle factory. He tired of this and took up his old profession of sea captain, voyaging as far as China and Australia. In 1854, he returned to Europe, inherited a bit of money from his brother and that, together with his savings as a captain, allowed him to buy an island. This island was to be his home from now on. It is a small and rocky place off the coast of Sardinia. With the help of faithful friends and companions he built himself a kind of South American dwelling of four rooms, all on one floor. He raised goats and cows and scratched a bit of produce out of the bare soil. He was always happy on his domain of Caprera, receiving many of the notables of the world there in patriarchal simplicity.

The great events of 1860 were now approaching. Garibaldi was annoyed that Italy and Piedmont were relying so heavily on foreigners and on diplomacy. Cavour was well aware of his presence; he intended to use him, up to a certain point. If Garibaldi were on the side of the king, the whole popular movement could be swung away from Mazzini; such unreliable firebrands, and the horrors of republicanism could be avoided. This went well at first, as Garibaldi got on excellently with Victor Emmanuel. Despite striking differences, their characters had certain strong things in common. They both liked cigars better than perfume, bowling better than whist, and battles better than politics and diplomacy. One of the mysteries of the whole unification is exactly what the king said to Garibaldi. Even Cavour never knew all that passed between them. While the French and the regular Piedmontese armies fought the Austrians, Garibaldi, at the head of special troops, was held in the sidelines. The General Staff were embarrassed by him; they were cut

to the quick in their professional pride when he won astounding victories with his troops. The policy of Cavour was to give him a certain rein but never too much, to obstruct his free maneuver. In the eyes of the people and in the eyes of those fervently interested in a new nation he was the only figure of honesty and courage. He also was the only Italian General who gained victories. By April of 1860 the new Parliament of the expanded state, which now included Tuscany and all the northern plain except Venice, met. Garibaldi erupted on the floor of the parliament, furious at the cession of Savoy and his own birth place, Nice, to France, which action he regarded as a crime. Cavour said Tuscany was certainly worth Nice, but nothing could stop Garibaldi's outburst, which caused embarrassment even to his friends. He resigned from parliament and wrote that his soul was in mourning, that he was full of disgust. Ten days later he left for Sicily and the greatest adventure of his life.

The departure of this expedition, which was the culminating event in the making of the nation, was attended by the most complete confusion. It seems practically sure that Cavour wanted no part of it; he had formed a new kingdom of upper Italy, it had a monarchical-constitutional government that was functioning; he was desperately afraid of disturbing Europe any further, let alone unleashing internal troubles of a radical nature. Let the Bourbons rule the South and he and the King the North: the height of folly would be to stir up Rome and the Pope, whom France was sworn to defend. The King probably liked the idea of the expedition but was afraid of Cavour. It is probably correct to say that the expedition was arranged privately, though there were all sorts of semi-private groups involved. It was off and on until the night of the departure, when it finally left in two old rented steamers. The moneys for the enterprise only arrived by the last train down from Milan, late in the evening. The rifles promised never turned up; all the early fighting was done with rusty and decrepit flint-locks. Sicily did not rise immediately upon Garibaldi's landing, though the terrain was somewhat prepared by months of agitation and by the presence of revolutionary groups scattered throughout the island. The expedition was by no means composed of workers or peasants: the majority of the volunteers were doctors and professional men and students of the northern plain. Once the expedition sailed, Garibaldi's agitation of the earlier weeks vanished and his peculiar mastery over the hearts and actions of his men was in evidence. The odds against success were enormous. The Neapolitan government had at its disposal a large professional army with 25,000 men in arms in Sicily and a navy that was sizable and far stronger than Piedmont's. They were sailing to an island that was as strange as Africa to them. If they failed they could ex-

pect only derision, death, and exile. Their own northern government would certainly disown them in defeat.

They landed at the little port of Marsala on the Western coast on May 11, under the eyes of the Neapolitan fleet. They barely got ashore when one of their boats was scuttled and the other destroyed by the enemy. They were alone on this strange island. Two days later Garibaldi declared himself dictator in the name of Victor Emmanuel and Italy. For Garibaldi the name "dictator" was a noble and antique title, borrowed from the Romans, signifying the assumptions of extraordinary powers for a certain prescribed length of time, in the name of and for the good of the people. On the 15th he won a decisive battle at Calatafimi, a battle fought against great odds and won with raw courage and bayonets. The Dictator well knew that this battle was the one which would make or break him, as the astute and long-suffering southerners would not flock to him until some measure of success had been gained. Twelve days later he entered and captured the capital city, Palermo. All of his guerrilla tricks and craftiness were employed. For nights beforehand the mountains around were covered with watch fires; his informants gave him information as to the easiest entrance-way. He had also in the meantime decoyed a part of the enemy troops into the interior. When he broke his way into the city the Neapolitan General, holed up in the Palace with over 18,000 men, bravely declared that he would bombard the city, exhibiting that peculiar faith in civilian bombardments which is so striking a feature of modern warfare. The effect on the civilian population, as is always the case, was hatred and loathing of the perpetrators of such barbarities. The Sicilians detested the Neapolitans to begin with: the bombardment was the most effective means of increasing that hatred. The Neapolitans panicked and Garibaldi, with his simplicity and grandeur, was worshiped almost as a God by the city. General Lanza, the Neapolitan General, felt he had to sue for an armistice, but in perfect Bourbon style he said that it was impossible for an officer of His Majesty to treat directly with a brigand. He asked a British Admiral who was in port to get in touch with the bandit chief. The Englishman said he could take no part in such dealings but was glad to offer his ship as a meeting place for two parties who were to be regarded as equals. His Excellency, Giuseppe Garibaldi, played it most coolly. He was capable of great dexterity at times. He was down to the last few rounds of ammunition and well knew that the troops he had decoyed into the interior were on their way. He signed a truce and immediately procured for himself by requisition all of the ammunition depots of the capital. Naples panicked completely. On the 6th of June 20,000 troops of the King of Naples surrendered and filed on board the Neapolitan ships and left.

While the capitals of Europe resounded with his name and he was absolute dictator in a major capital Garibaldi settled down in one very humble room of the Palace with his cot-bed, saddle, and a good supply of cigars. If even his closest friends had doubts as to his ability to govern, it can easily be imagined how frenzied and apprehensive Cavour was, a peninsula away in Turin. Surrounded by Mazzinians, radicals, moderates, frightened conservatives, uprising peasants, generals, and student visionaries, Garibaldi governed well. Everything was done in the name of Italy and the King; he consistently appointed ministers of sound, moderate stature. Though one of the most ardent anti-clericals of his time, he understood the religious superstitions of the Southerners and participated in high mass at the Cathedral, sitting in the throne of the Apostolic Delegate with his red shirt and bare sword, a secular Archangel, while the Cardinal performed the holy office. This was an act of plain good sense. Only if performed by a man of lesser stature could it be called Machiavellian.

The next six months made the nation. They are six months of political conflict between the statesman, Cavour, and the hero, Garibaldi. The difference between these two men is not to be thought as a difference between right and left, though that pair of tags applies. It is a difference between keen intellect and simple courage, between knowing what popularity means and being popular. If there are mythological parts to the soul of a state, these two men represent two of the parts, two good parts, but two parts between which there can be seldom any meeting. Cavour represents coolness and faith in Parliamentary ways, combined with Machiavellian methods and pragmatic awareness of the importance of material things; Garibaldi represents enthusiasm, nationalism, honesty, self-sacrifice without hope of reward, and courage.

Cavour lost the first rounds in this conflict. Garibaldi's expedition to Sicily, which Cavour had regarded as both idiotic and dangerous, had succeeded. Cavour now had to swallow this immense fact and adjust his policy, namely to take Sicily away from the dictator and get it into his own hands. He sent a vainglorious and despicable man to Sicily to attempt to take over the government and represent his interests. This man only aroused dissension in the island. He was banished from the island by the dictator's orders on the same boat with two common spies. Cavour then tried to annex the island immediately to the state of Piedmont by the method of a quick plebiscite, hoping therein to stop Garibaldi's avowed intention of marching on to Rome and Naples. He failed in this, Garibaldi insisting on a regional assembly that would respect the local interests of the island. Cavour next tried to prevent Garibaldi's crossing the straits to

the mainland, but again suffered defeat. The straits were crossed with great wariness and skill by Garibaldi, probably with the confidence of the king, who was another of Cavour's problems. The Dictator, with supreme confidence and skill, won a major battle on the mainland in Calabria and marched straight north by forced marches to the capital city Naples, with the remnants of the Bourbon power disintegrating before him and the population aroused to enormous heights of enthusiasm. Cavour indulged in the shabbiest of double dealings with poor little King Francis at Naples, treating officially with him through ambassadors, who were negotiating for an agreement while at the same time trying to foment a popular rebellion of his own through agents and trimmers within the kingdom. It was to no avail. Garibaldi entered the greatest city of the Peninsula in triumph on the 7th of September, Francis, the last of the Bourbon kings, having fled a day or so before to the fortress of Gaeta. Once again the Hero, surrounded by adulation and absolute ruler in one of the greatest cities of Europe, did not lose his head, but showed himself eminently fair-minded. As a loyal subject of his king, he immediately made a present of the entire Neapolitan fleet to the Admirals of Piedmont. This again was an enormous fact to be faced by Cavour—an entire and ancient realm was being offered to the King as the result of a popular revolution and uprising led by a heroic Dictator. He again tried to provoke an immediate plebiscite so as to annex this uncomfortable kingdom to his own government and give it the semblance of respectability before Garibaldi should proceed on to Rome upsetting the whole apple cart of international diplomacy and offending the clerical government of Napoleon, who were, as you recall, the sworn defenders of the Papacy, and without whom Cavour and his northern Italian kingdom would never have come into existence. Garibaldi's march to Rome was thwarted by the unexpected resistance of the Bourbon's army north of Naples. He fought his greatest battle and won it, though it was at a price in men and materials that stopped his further advance. This battle, which was fought on a major scale and was by no means a guerrilla skirmish, showed Garibaldi to be the most skillful general on the scene by any criterion of generalship. It was now that Cavour stopped losing and assumed command. Breaking all rules of international behavior and adopting his opponents' tactics, he proceeded to invade a neutral state, attempting to give it the appearance of a popular uprising. He sent the King and the army of Piedmont on a ruthless march of invasion through the states of the Pope, with the avowed purpose of their answering a cry from the downtrodden subjects of his Holiness's government. The real purpose was obvious to everyone—he would by this stroke assume command of the revolution, forestall Garibaldi's ad-

vance to Rome, and arrive on the scene in the now defunct kingdom of Naples with the King and Army of Piedmont. He won this move: it was his greatest moment. It is a most paradoxical moment and was an enormous gamble. He had somehow to persuade people to back a revolution in order to prevent a revolution. He had to push for a policy of universal suffrage and popular sovereignty by plebiscite, an idea which he and his party abhorred for the most profound and reasonable political reasons. It must be realized that to support a plebiscite after the overthrowing of a legitimate government implies the right of rebellion against any constituted government. He had to swallow the idea that a popular concept of nationality as proposed by Mazzini was, in the newly emerging reality, a practical idea. With consummate tact he suggested to Napoleon III that Cavour was the only safeguard against Garibaldi and revolution and suggested to Garibaldi that Napoleon III was an ever-present danger to the unified state. This amounted to threatening Napoleon with Garibaldi, and Garibaldi with Napoleon, and hence neutralizing both, leaving himself, Cavour, as the kingpin in the game. In the midst of this he was sending arms secretly to Hungary, as a revolution there would have been handy in preventing any Austrian intervention and just might mean getting hold of Venice. Not the least of his difficulties was Victor Emmanuel, who had been given his head and was in command of the armies. The King had to be made to realize that he was a constitutional monarch, that is to say be made to think he was the boss while leaving Cavour as the true master.

The last scenes of the drama unfolded in Naples. Garibaldi, with a few followers, went forth to meet the King as he was advancing at the head of his armies. He took off his hat and saluted the King as the first King of Italy. He and the King rode together awhile on horseback in silence. Garibaldi was melancholy; the King was embarrassed. A few days later the Hero rode in the same carriage with his King into Naples, as the King's ministers had felt it essential for appearance's sake. The King refused even to review the ceremony that marked the dissolution of the Dictator's troops, troops which had just gained for the King a kingdom. Garibaldi suggested that he be retained for a year as ruler in the South, as he had full command of the people's love and trust. This was refused. He was offered a title, a yacht, an income. He refused all of these, saying that he had not fought to make a career for himself but to make Italy. He departed from Naples a few days later, an embittered man, complaining that he had been thrown aside like an old orange peel. He took with him only a few essentials for his island farm, among them a bag of seed-corn.

This conflict remained an essential flaw in the new

state. The majority of the citizens in the south of the new Kingdom remained uninterested in and detached from the distant government at Turin. In the North, where the majority of Garibaldi's volunteers came from, deep mistrust was sown.

On the 14th of January, 1861, the new Kingdom was proclaimed officially. Garibaldi wrote to his friends that to make the country great one had to get rid of politics, which was a "dirty and bestial" thing. He described the Parliament as a nasty assemblage of words and sold interests. He appeared in Parliament on the 18th of April in his red shirt, South American poncho, and flowing beard. Looking straight at Cavour she said: "I ask of the representative of the Nation if, as a man, I will ever be able to shake the hand of him who has made me a stranger in Italy." This ghastly scene, together with the terrible worries from the south, hastened Cavour's death, which occurred less than a month later.

Mazzini, as you recall, had faith in "*Dio e popolo*." Garibaldi had faith in the King, no matter what happened, and had faith in a free people, whom he was prepared to liberate whether they were ready or wanted it. Cavour, despite all his skill and cunning, had faith in a Parliament, a faith that may have been as misleading sometimes as the faiths of Mazzini and Garibaldi. It is only fair that we read Cavour's own statement of faith,

as it is perhaps the only statement that is acceptable to prudent men. I quote from a letter he wrote in French to a friend of his in December of 1860:

For my part I have no confidence in dictatorships, especially if they be civilian dictatorships. I believe that one can accomplish many things with a Parliament that would be impossible under absolute power. An experience of thirteen years has convinced me that an honest and energetic minister, who has nothing to fear from the revelations of the representatives, and who is not of a nature to be intimidated by the violence of faction and party, has everything to gain from parliamentary conflict. I never feel so weak as when the Parliament is not in session. This is understandable, as I could not with impunity betray my origins, or deny the principles of my whole life. I am the son of Liberty, it is to her that I owe all that I am. If a veil is to be put on her statue, it will not be done by my hand. If one persuaded the Italians that a dictator was a necessity for them, they would choose Garibaldi and not me. And they would be right.

The Parliamentary road is longer, but it is surer. The elections in Naples and Sicily don't frighten me. I am told that they will be bad: so be it. The Mazzinians are less to be feared in Parliament than in their clubs—the calm even air of Turin will quiet them. The majority of the nation is monarchical, the army is pure and cleansed of all Garibaldian stain, the capital is ultra-conservative. If with all of these elements we cannot move ahead, we should prove to be the greatest of imbeciles.

